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London

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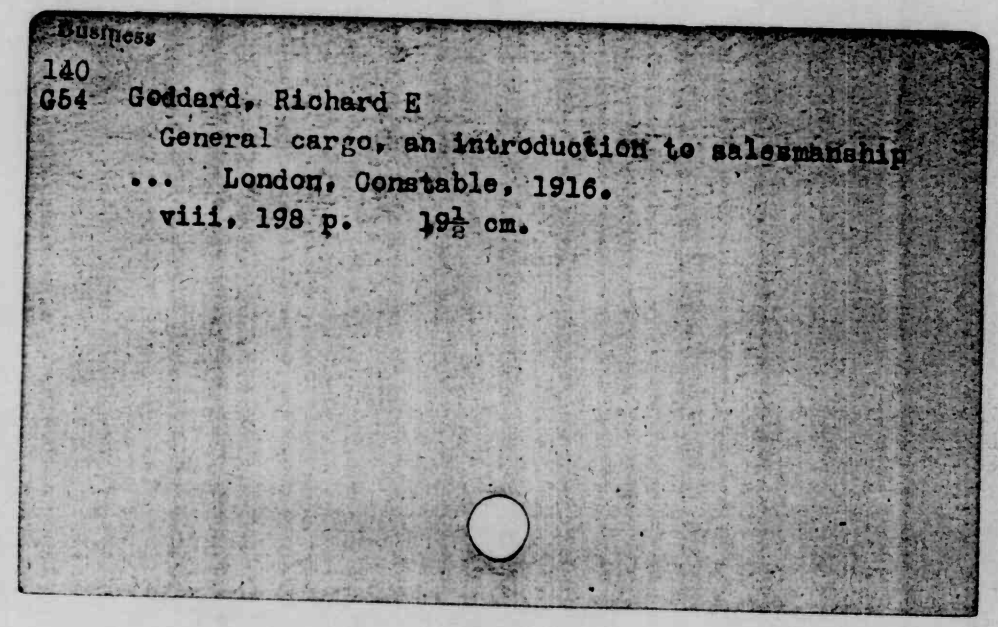

Business
140
G54 Goddard, Richard E
General cargo, an introduction to salesmanship ... London, Constable, 1916.
viii, 198 p. 19½ cm.

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TECHNICAL MICROFORM DATA

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By
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GENERAL CARGO

AN INTRODUCTION TO SALESMANSHIP

PRINTED BY EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, LTD., HIS MAJESTY'S PRINTERS,
EAST HARDING STREET, LONDON, E.C.

GENERAL CARGO

AN INTRODUCTION TO SALESMANSHIP

BY

RICHARD E. GODDARD

Foreign Sales Manager to Humber Ltd.
Coventry

LONDON
CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LTD.
1916

17-21787

Business

D140
G54

Received 15 Feb 1917 7h 11 m. P.M.
A.P. 19 "

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PREFACE

THIS small work is intended to act as a modest pointer to those who desire to make an effort, after the war, to get back some of the losses caused by the war. It is not undertaken in any ambitious vein; it is not even a manual, in the comprehensive sense of the word. Nevertheless, having had exceptional opportunities of studying, first-hand, the manners, customs and requirements of the principal countries of the world, added possibly to a penchant for observation and the acquisition of knowledge, the writer has managed to collect a certain amount of information, which may be helpful to such as wish to know how results may best be obtained. The falling of an apple from a tree gave Newton the clue to the theory of gravitation. It may be that some portion of the following essay may afford a like clue to some points which have hitherto passed

unobserved or neglected. "Many a true word is spoken in jest," added to which a jest is invariably more palatable than a didactic exposition on the merits, say, of "Kultur." Also a jest will usually leave more impression upon the mind than a proverb—unless the latter embodies a jest. Those who desire fuller details and particulars of, for example, quantities of commodities imported by various territories, together with data of customs duties, trading facilities, etc., I would refer to the *Board of Trade Journal* or the Blue Books and Memoranda issued by the Board of Trade. They are comprehensive and excellently readable. Herein are merely chronicled such things as the writer has seen, observed, or had brought to his notice in different parts of the globe during the past ten years. If not wholly instructive in themselves, they may possibly produce the desired result by creating a cry, like Oliver Twist's, for "more," when information can be obtained, as stated above, in the periodicals referred to.

LONDON, *June*, 1916.

GENERAL CARGO

AN INTRODUCTION TO SALESMANSHIP

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION—THE UNIVERSALITY OF TRADE

THE world, or the population thereof, can be divided into two camps: buyers and sellers. The classification is a sweeping one, no doubt, but it is none the less true—theoretically. In practice, every person, with the possible exception of a small blasé, bored or unenterprising minority, content to live on an income derived from its forbears, assumes regularly the dual rôle. The questions of purchase and sale, therefore, comprise the sum total of each man's life.

There are some, I know, who will scoff at this assertion. Those who look down upon trade as something petty and mean—unless the goods dealt in are too bulky to be exposed in the seller's premises. But even they, aloof though they hold themselves, would have to admit, on due consideration, that the element of barter governs their existence every whit as much as it does that of the retail merchant or the primitive savage exchanging cattle for corn. It is the fashion for many to exalt the Professions as being above trade. Yet the doctor, the parson and the lawyer are only salesmen in exactly the same degree essentially as is the baker who supplies

your morning loaf and the barber who cuts your hair. Even the landed proprietor is no more exempt than the others. He sells the right to farm or reside on his land, receiving in return either service or kind.

To generalise, one might even go farther and say that he who would claim exemption must be either a knave or a fool, and, moreover, one who would belie one of the principal points of man's superiority over the beasts: for the instinct of commerce is practically the only instinct that Darwin, Haeckel, and the multitude of agnostic philosophers have not tracked down as being due to evolution and natural selection. Love and the desire for self-preservation, according to the philosophies of the world, is a more or less chemical process—as common to the protozoa as it is to the reptiles; as universal in its laws where the birds and fishes are concerned as it is in the case of man. But none of them has ever proved, or sought to prove, that modern commerce has evolved from a primitive form of exchange and barter—engendered æons ago by some enlightened speck of protoplasm possessing something of which it did not stand in immediate need, and which it was willing to trade with a brother "speck" for something else that held more attraction.

The cultivated intelligence of the fox-terrier is supposed to be on a high plane, for an animal; but evolution has yet to supply the motive power to enable it to barter a fat, juicy bone for a mash of biscuits and gravy—or *vice versâ*.

If, then, we are to be really honest, let us admit the desirability of trade. Let us regard it as showing, if nothing else, that there is something in which man stands alone—something that cannot be accounted for by evolution, chemical affinity, reflex action, or any of the other "itys," "ions" or "isms" by which we have been hag-ridden of late years, and which would dub us, physiologically and psychologically, of no more account than a blastoderm or an amœba.

In the "boy" of every nation the love of barter reigns supreme. It is one of the magic keys to romance. Glamour attaches to it. There is a thrill in the acquisition of an article envied, by the exchange for it of some other article less esteemed—either because it is in more plentiful supply or with which familiarity has lowered the value. Not even the arrival of Solomon's ships from Tarshish laden with gold and silver, ivory, apes and peacocks could have provoked more ecstasy in the mind of the great king than the obtainment of a batch, say, of Virgin Island stamps from across the seas in scores for a penknife with a broken blade or a handful of "commoneys" provokes in the make-up of the embryo trader of to-day.

At its inception, commerce was bounded entirely by locality. One man had a certain number of sheep, another possessed more corn than he required; yet another was particularly skilled, perhaps, in the fashioning of flint arrow-heads.

The elders of the tribe or clan would meet at the end of the day to chat. Possibly, more in sport than with intent, the owner of the sheep would remark that he was short of corn. A wiseacre would suggest bartering so many sheep for so much corn. The flint-dresser, whose hunting had been unsuccessful of late, would offer a supply of flints, as required, in exchange for so much corn and a portion of the sheep —when the latter was cut up. It may be that a certain amount of distrust cropped up, so that the tribal head was deputed to hold the produce against redemption as required by each of the bargaining parties. Thus would be initiated the first principles of banking.

As time went on, a member of another tribe would find his way into the precincts of the first. His dress of skins was haply of a new fashion —better dressed or dyed than that of his hosts. His particular clan may have possessed the art of tanning, so that the skin was more flexible than that worn by the men of the other district. Envy and ambition would foster the anxiety to be similarly clad. Ways and means would be discussed. Each man would describe the intensity of his longing in terms manifesting the value to him of the garment. One might remark he would rather have it than a goat or a sheep; another token of value would be so many measures of corn. And—as immediately a standard of value is struck between two objects the train is laid for an interchange of the articles—the

period intervening betwixt a transference of the commodities would be very speedily bridged.

So probably was instituted inter-communal trade, and so mutual inter-dependence grew.

In the case of Great Britain, international commerce is supposed to have been inaugurated by the Phœnicians. Certain it is that the countries adjoining the Mediterranean enjoyed a considerable number of years' start over us, with a corresponding degree of experience—experience which undoubtedly enabled them to drive hard bargains at our expense. That they instituted monopolies there is no reason to doubt, and probably it was by reason of these that eventually the trade was wrested by us from them.

A monopoly, however, invariably defeats its own ends through excess of greed. Colonies and an inter-colonial trade may be of great value —and undoubtedly are—to the mother country, but a protective tariff or monopoly is a two-sided affair unless it is extremely carefully planned. It may at any moment become a Damocleian sword, suspended above the heads of its owners. In the "Wealth of Nations," Adam Smith, referring to the year 1774, remarks as follows:—

"If the manufactures of Great Britain have been advanced, as they certainly have, by the colony trade, it has not been by means of the monopoly of that trade, but in spite of the monopoly. The effect of the monopoly has been, not to augment the quantity, but to alter the quality and shape of a part of the manufactures

of Great Britain, and to accommodate to a market, from which the returns are slow and distant, what would otherwise have been accommodated to one from which the returns are frequent and near. Its effect has consequently been to turn a part of the capital of Great Britain from an employment in which it would have maintained a greater quantity of manufacturing industry to one in which it maintains a much smaller, and thereby to diminish, instead of increasing, the whole quantity of manufacturing industry maintained in Great Britain."

Matters, of course, have changed much since the time when the "Wealth of Nations" was written. Nevertheless, one is forced to believe that, if it had not been for our colonies and possessions abroad, more attention would have been allotted to the general markets of the world.

We are so accustomed to regard the colonies as part of ourselves that we are prone to forget that an article which may be suitable for Great Britain is not always conformable to the conditions of, say, Australia or the West Indies. For a time, the ties of relationship induced the inhabitants of the colonies to gloss over any inconveniences to which they were put by the commodities supplied not exactly fitting their requirements. But, as other nations took up the bidding for the market, they became more exigent. "Certainly," they said, "we would prefer to buy from Great Britain, but if you will

not send us what we want we needs must go elsewhere for it."

Now this reasoning is, unfortunately, often quite incomprehensible to the British manufacturer. His argument is that his goods *ought* to sell just because they are British, irrespective of their adaptability to the purpose for which they are needed. There is no question of their excellence—Great Britain has nothing to fear from any nation under the sun on that account—it is only that the British manufacturer will not modify what he considers is right, let Gabriel and all his followers trump never so loudly.

And just there is where the colonial monopoly has spoiled us. It gave us, for a couple of centuries, an easy market, which we, more or less, controlled. It rendered us, to our undoing in many ways, independent of outside competition. And the result is that other countries—America, Germany, and Japan—have stepped in, studied local conditions and requirements, adapted or modified their ways to meet the latter, and not only captured the general markets, but made serious inroads upon those we have always regarded as our own special preserves.

There is absolutely no doubt that we can compete and win, hands down, if we set ourselves to the task. But the work—as is the case with all work really worth doing—is not going to be child's play.

Taking buyers generally, be they Russian, East or West Indian, African or Australian

they would infinitely prefer to pay a slightly enhanced price for a British article—at least, that has been my experience—only providing the article will do what they want it to do.

American locomotives, automobiles, and machinery generally, sell principally because they are adapted to colonial conditions. Not—and this is a point where they score unintentionally—because the American manufacturers have adapted their goods to the foreign markets, but because the conditions prevalent in the States are more nearly akin to those in all the newer countries. The German manufacturer, on the other hand, has "got in" by studying the requirements and modifying his productions to suit. The Japanese have gone a step further and adapted British goods—*and* trade marks often—to suit the same foreign markets. And Britain—dear, stolid, good-natured, altruistic Britain—adopts a Micawber-like attitude and feels sure that something will turn up, and the foreign buyers will find out the errors of their ways and come back to us eventually like Bo-Peep's sheep.

There is no doubt whatever that these self-same foreign buyers *want* to and *will*, but it is up to us to let them see the "crook" is still in existence, and that if they do come, the "fold" is going to be made good and comfortable for them. It is no use to cry "Quis?" and expect a prompt "Ego" in reply, unless a sufficiently attractive proposition is held up to view.

CHAPTER II

The Factory

BACK of all preparations for the acquisition of foreign trade must lie a thoroughly efficient factory organisation. The factory may be likened to the coping-stone of an arch. No matter how well constructed may be the other portion, if the coping-stone is not set plumb and true, the remainder of the edifice will, sooner or later, come to grief.

This statement may appear so self-evident that it may be deemed a futility to dwell upon it, as, naturally, unless the factory is working efficiently, manufacturers could not dream of carrying on their business. My reply is: True, but there are several ways in which the word "efficiently" may be regarded. In the first place, with perhaps several rare exceptions, factories in Great Britain have been put up primarily to supply articles for the home market. The machinery, jigs, designs, and general "lay-out" are planned to produce a commodity for sale, if not on the spot, at least somewhere in Great Britain. The idea of exportation has come afterwards—possibly during a slack period in the home trade. In any

case—as I admit, with possibly a few exceptions, which lie principally in the realm of "piece goods"—the foreign trade has, up to the present, taken quite a secondary place in the firm's mental outlook. The result is that, whilst the home houses, agents and retailers have been gently nursed, and given the idea that all the manufacturer desires is to abase himself on the mat while he eats out of their hands, the foreign buyer is coldly relegated to a very inferior limbo, into which a few crumbs, just out of generosity, are cast to him now and then, at the august manufacturer's will. It is the old story: the man on the spot obtains preference principally because he can make himself more potentially objectionable than the man at a distance. It is only human nature. Any kind of a fool can frame up a plausible excuse in writing. But it requires a strong will, backed up by tact, to induce, verbally, a purr of satisfaction and forgiveness in the irate individual who has taken an inconvenient railway journey to make you a present of what is in his mind. In addition, you say, perhaps: "The home trade is the backbone of my business. If I don't please my customer, there are other firms on the spot who will. And then, he's such a good fellow too: he's always open to reason. And he certainly does seem hard pressed for the goods."

And so the reasoning obtains; the personal interview has won the day. The home buyer must have what he wants if double time has

to be worked to compass it. Possibly—for even manufacturers have consciences, sometimes—the idea crosses his mind that it *is* rather hard luck on Rameswamy or Ivanovitch or Li Hung Chop and Co., in India, Russia or China, having to wait. Still, the conscience is salved by the argument that, considering it takes four to eight weeks for shipment, anyway a day or a week or two longer in delivery can't matter so very much.

Now, this is all well and good—if the manufacturer intends to regard foreign sales only as a nice little windfall to help him out during the close season at home. He can scarcely be surprised, however, if the windfalls get smaller by degrees and beautifully less. That is the nature of windfalls since we have given up the old ideas of magic and good fairies and replaced them by tabulating machines and intensive culture.

But if, on the other hand, the manufacturer has come to rely on the arrival of a few foreign drafts or cheques from shipping agencies, the cessation of orders may cause him grievous heartburnings. Human nature will blind his eyes to the fact that he alone is to blame. Instead, he will censure the foreign buyer and arrive, probably, at the quite erroneous conclusion that the latter is no good, and that he had better seek for another outlet in that particular territory. After the same process of stultification has been repeated several times, he will either sit up and give the matter a little prayerful thought and

mend his ways—or deliveries—or he will turn the foreign business down as being more trouble than it is worth.

This at least, I regret to say, is the method which has reigned too often in the past. The war, disastrous and terrible as it is, has had one good result, inasmuch as Honourable Manufacturers—like Honourable Ministers—have begun to sit up a little and take notice. It is beginning to dawn upon them that, after the war, money has *got* to be brought *into* the country somehow, and the only way to do it is to seek fresh outlets for the foreign trade.

The Argentina and India are supplying us with commodities. Australia and Canada also, and other countries, are doing a share. Prices of these commodities have steadily risen. The only way to get the credit back again on our side is to redouble our exports. To effect this means that not only have our old markets to be nursed, but that we must make a strong bid for others, so far virgin or only slightly touched by us. This is the reason for stating that the factory must be the first object to receive attention and, if necessary, overhaul, in order to cope with the special conditions.

To begin with, the home and the foreign trades demand, as a rule, two totally different classes of products. In piece goods, the home demand is for neutral tints and unobtrusive patterns. The foreign markets, on the contrary, particularly the Indies, demand bright and showily-

marked materials. In machinery, motor-cars, china-ware, and numerous other items, each territory has its own special specification, to which, as a rule, the British standard specification does not apply. As already stated the British product scores not once, but every time, so far as the workmanship is concerned. But that is of little avail if the local requirements are not met.

One of the first steps, therefore, for the manufacturer who wishes to organise his foreign sales is to divide his estimated output into two portions: that of the home trade and that of the foreign. The question of the requirements of the various territories will be examined further on.

The second step should be to make up his mind how much of the output he is going to turn over to the foreign sales. Supply governs demand to a far greater extent than demand does supply—nowadays, at all events. You can far more easily sell a large quantity, in greater or smaller lots, than you can a small quantity—if your sales organisation is up to the mark. If the foreign department knows that it has got a certain amount of produce to "place," it should, and in most cases will, be able to make the necessary arrangements to handle it. This statement is made, of course, on the assumption that the commodity is of good quality, reasonable in price, and adapted to the conditions it will be required to fulfil.

The third, and perhaps the most important

step is to arrange that the goods produced for the foreign trade shall be modified as may be necessary to suit the market. It is not always possible, in these days of machine repetition work, to depart from standard to a very serious extent; but what I would plead is that a separate standard should be allowed for the foreign as opposed to the home trade. The hard-and-fast rule that no deviation from fixed designs is feasible should be relaxed a little, at all events. By this I do not mean it to be understood that modifications should be effected to suit the whim of every individual buyer: such a practice would spell ruin so far as economic production is concerned. But the foreign standard should embody the general *trend* of design most favoured by the territories in which an outlet is to be sought. If, for example, boots are in question, and it is the fashion in one of the markets in which trade is desired for the inhabitants to cut off the big toe, it is useless to expect the merchants there to purchase footwear of which the lasts are designed to give a smart pointed toe-piece.

The same basis of reasoning applies to every commodity. When all is said, the buyer is the person who knows best what it is he wants, and if one manufacturer, no matter how well he advertises his wares, and whatever inducements he is prepared to offer in the matter of discounts and rebates, will not supply in accordance with the purchaser's specification, the latter will inevitably go elsewhere.

As a matter of fact, it has been my experience that the modifications demanded by various territories are not nearly so great as, at first sight, they appear. Naturally, in the case of American manufacturers, where pretty well everything is sacrificed to the production of repetition work in large quantities, even a minor variation from standard means the throwing out of gear of the whole industrial machine. But with the American manufacturer, accustomed to handle enormous outputs and able to dispose of them principally amongst the ninety millions of residents in North America, the question of a hundred or two machines—or whatever may be in issue—more or less does not count to any great extent. With the British manufacturer, however, whose production is more limited, the resultant disorganisation need not be so serious a matter, particularly if he will divide the output of his factory into the two portions as indicated. The trouble is that we, in Great Britain, are—or have been up to the present—too versatile to produce on the most economical basis. Our factories turn out too many models, grades or designs. Naturally, an excess of competition leads to a corresponding cutting of profits. When, in addition to this, the increased cost of labour and raw material, which was in evidence even before the war, is taken into account, it can easily be seen that many factories must be working, if not at a loss, on a very small margin. Individuality is an excellent thing no doubt, but as a slogan it is subject

to a multitude of disadvantages. For one thing, it creates an unnecessary fastidiousness in the consumer. He is apt to buy an article because of its personal appeal rather than on account of its actual merits. The result is that a baker, for example, may be turning out half-a-dozen different kinds of bread, which entail several different processes, the demand for which may vary from day to day, so that some days he is unable to supply his customers with one particular kind, having, probably, a quantity of another sort left on his hands. The point is that, whilst each manufacturer should seek to preserve the individuality of his goods, he only punishes himself if he multiplies those individualities to an extent that hampers economic production. The ideal, possibly utopian, method would be for the manufacturers of certain and the same commodities to meet and decide on a plan of action—that is, if the foreign trade is to be kept as well as captured. One firm would then concentrate on one particular model, another on a second, and so forth.

Then, in the event of house Number One receiving an enquiry for a class of goods upon which house Number Two had concentrated its energies, the enquiry would be passed on, and *vice versâ*. In the present state of affairs, however, this consummation is scarcely to be hoped for. Failing such an arrangement, the only alternative is for the manufacturer to focus his energies so far as possible on the production of an article

suitable to a certain number of territories—that is to say, territories where the natural or economic conditions are nearly allied. He should then work up the business in those territories for all he is worth. It is an easy matter to find out the average imports in any particular line, and he can plan his output accordingly. The actual getting of the trade is a matter for the sales department, and will be treated of further on. It is desirable to emphasise, though, that if the sales organisation knows what amount of stuff it has to handle, the orders can be procured accordingly, providing there is sufficient "will" and hustle behind. I would like to remark that I do not use the word "hustle" in its unpleasant and American sense. "Hustle" is so often employed for a state of being in which the heads, departmental and otherwise, wallow in a sea of documents, many of which are letters that have remained unanswered for days on end, whilst they vapour, loudly and insistently, regarding the amount of business they have done, can do, and intend to do. The real "hustle" is the quiet confidence and energy bred of method, knowledge and tact.

Granted that the sales department has the requisite amount of savoir faire, the factory, once a line of policy has been decided on, will find that the amount of trouble caused by demands for "variations" will be practically negligible. Whilst you cannot sell a man something totally different from what he desires—if you

do, the trouble is bound to recoil on you sooner or later—yet, if your product meets the bill so far as essentials are concerned, an efficient sales organisation will either convince the buyer that the "pretty-prettys" and embellishments he demands are not really needed, or it will agree to carry them out—at a price. That is, naturally, so long as they do not interfere with the whole working of the concern. It is as well to remember, therefore, that if Kubla Khan, of Timbuctoo, has his soul set upon a sewing-machine, or a consignment of anklets for his dusky, but none the less exigent, wives and concubines, with sky-blue spots on a gold or red ground, whilst your standard is plain black or natural brass, that wonders can be done by a couple of enthusiastic boys with a paint-brush and a few pots of enamel.

And I would strongly advise that the sales organisation be kept well and effectively posted as regards the intentions and plans of the factory. It is so awkward to be in the position of promising delivery without fail of a thousand pots of, say, Persian sherbet, and receive advice later, from an irate customer in Kamskatka or Tierra del Fuego, that aperient fruit salts have been received instead. The effects are apt to be the reverse of what was anticipated.

CHAPTER III

The Export Department

THE export department is most usually regarded by employees with a philatelic bent, who hold tenure in other precincts, as the place that collars all the foreign stamps. It is occasionally also looked upon as an outlet for by-products—or manufacturing freaks — which have been refused by the British customers at home. (This, at least, was the opinion that ruled until quite recently, save in a few favoured cases.)

It is a department, in addition, usually to be avoided on mail days; but, on all ordinary occasions, thought to be a backwater—a haven of retreat—unbeset by the smother and flurry of the regular spate of correspondence which accompanies the home trade. There are even people who cherish the impression that it has nothing to do. Now, all these ideas, with the exception of the first-named, are entirely erroneous. The routine of the office carries with it, perhaps, more diversity; but a correct and well-organised routine is even more necessary in the export than in any other department. If a breakdown occurs in the factory, numberless hands are available to put

it right. Should the home forwarding department have despatched a parcel of goods to the wrong address, the telephone will rectify the mistake and they can be brought back by the next available train. But if a wrong shipment has been effected, and the steamer has actually sailed, not all the king's horses nor all the king's men can prevent the consignment being delivered at its destination—failing, naturally, an accident to the vessel itself. Further, the home trader obtains his stock in small parcels or lots, little and often. The foreign buyer, on the other hand, who can command, with the best of luck, a weekly or fortnightly steamer, has of necessity to procure his goods in larger quantities at a time. I except, of course, the buyers in France, Italy and Spain, to which, in ordinary times, rail transport can be obtained pretty nearly every day.

In organising the foreign sales department, therefore, too much attention cannot be paid to the questions of method and routine. A regular system of following up enquiries should be one of the first points to be instituted. Very often a buyer abroad, one with whom you have not hitherto had business relations, will send an enquiry for a certain class of goods out broadcast. It may be that it is only a tentative query or a preliminary feeler. He may, even, not have decided definitely that he wants to handle that special commodity. Nevertheless, he should be "followed up," within a couple of weeks at latest, after his reply is due—in the event, of

course, of his not having answered your letter, giving him quotations and particulars regarding delivery.

He may have shelved the matter temporarily, and, amongst a dozen or more catalogues and price lists, yours may have got mislaid.

A letter of quotation and a follow-up letter are really identically the same as an advertisement. On first reading, the information contained may or may not appeal. Let the idea, however, be conveyed again and, if necessary, yet again, and it is more than probable that a sale will eventually be effected.

The courtesy of a letter demands the courtesy, at least, of an acknowledgment; therefore continue, not to bombard the prospective customer—for that is almost as irritating to him as the finding of a batch of bills instead of billet-doux amongst your matutinal correspondence is to you—but to keep him gently aware that your firm is in existence. You may hint, profitably, that one of the principal objects of your raison d'être, if not the entire motive of existence, in the world's scheme of things, is to be of service to him.

He will, in time, either send you a trial order or inform you that he has decided to purchase elsewhere. Even then the matter should not be suffered to lapse into oblivion. Keep a reference to the correspondence on a special file, and at a later date—say, six months after—if you have not in the meantime fixed up an agency in that particular territory, forward another

catalogue and enquire if the chances of business have improved. If, too, in his last letter intimating that he has had to go past you, he has also been unbusinesslike, but thoughtful enough, to advise you with whom he *has* placed the order, it will be as well to obtain your competitor's catalogue and find out just for what reason your offer failed.

In dealing with enquiries, particularly preliminary enquiries, the very fullest details, compatible with a letter of moderate length, should be given.

The prices, discounts and rebates may be embodied in the letter itself, but they should invariably be given again in tabular form at the end of the letter. Prices should be given for packing and delivery f.o.b. at the port from which the best service of steamers is obtainable for that particular market. And, in addition, an *alternative* quotation c.i.f. the nearest port to the customer's town should be supplied. Make it a rule to give these details *always*, whether they are demanded or no, unless, of course, the enquiry emanates from a firm of shipping or export agents in London or one of the other British centres, who are acting as buyers for abroad. In the latter case, they will naturally make their own arrangements.

It is well worth while, also, to give the *net* cost c.i.f. in the currency of the country from which the enquiry has been sent. It can be quite easily calculated on the exchange ruling at date of posting. That is to say, a line will be added

remarking that the net figure to the buyer will be so many rupees, in the case of India; roubles, in the case of Russia; milreis, for Brazil, and taels or dollars, for China; the rate at which the exchange has been calculated being also shown. This is a small matter in itself, but by so acting the customer knows exactly what amount he will be called upon to remit. In the case of countries where the exchange fluctuates considerably, a note can be added that the quotation is approximate, and that the actual amount will depend on the rate of exchange ruling when the payment falls due.

The importance of quoting costs in the currency of the country for which the goods are intended cannot be too highly estimated.

Tradition has divided the population of the world into two portions: those who are knaves and those who are fools. As a matter of fact, the diagnosis would be more correct if it held that the make-up of each individual contained the two ingredients in the proportion of two to one—where normal people are concerned—two of fool to one of knave. In the abnormal person, the ratios are reversed, and meteoric success or jail is the result.

In the general way, however, the first-mentioned ratio is the more prevalent. In consequence, it is always safe to assume that the man from whom an enquiry emanates is entirely normal. This being so, if it is desired to make a sale, no chance should be missed to render the

conditions of the sale absolutely clear. It was the custom before the war for the promoters of certain foreign lotteries to circularise Great Britain with a view to inducing the inhabitants to participate in the various drawings. Possibly one person in every ten thousand was inveigled into taking a ticket. The amounts of the prizes were, as a rule, printed in the prospectus in marks and francs. Nowadays, the value of these respective denominations is fairly widely known—through the decrease in value of the former and the comparative stability of the latter. Heretofore, except to the initiated few, the terms were more or less meaningless.

The average layman in the provinces—that is, the man of the artizan class to whom a flutter most appeals—considered either that the prizes offered were too enormous or was informed, by somebody only a little less wise, that foreign coinage was unreliable, and that the money it was possible to win represented in English coinage a very small sum.

In either case, the prospective investor decided to let well alone. Had the prize-money been given in pounds sterling, the percentage of entrants would probably have increased by at least forty. Of course, there are individuals who "fall for" anything—such are the patent medicine fiends and the purchasers of hair dyes, adipose tissue reducers, and compounds for the restoration of lost youth. With them a price or particulars given in incomprehensible form merely adds zest

to the acquisition of the article. But to the multitude, a catalogue in a foreign language or prices quoted in foreign currency is meaningless. As an argument against this reasoning, it may be held that foreign buyers are usually pretty shrewd. This, I grant, is the case. Nevertheless, in the absence of definite statistics giving the proportions of knave and fool in a man, it is kinder to presume that the latter quality predominates. It makes for a more comfortable feeling as regards entering into business relationships—particularly from the salesman's point of view.

It may happen occasionally that an enquiry will be received for, say, soap, whilst your particular product is hardware, the letter having been addressed to you under a misapprehension. The usual method of dealing with such a letter is merely to acknowledge it and express regrets that your house is unable to comply with the applicant's request for information, as it does not manufacture soap. In many cases, the firm has a feeling that it has been slighted—it takes for granted that the whole world is, or should be, aware of the fact that it always has, does, and will confine its priceless energies to the turning out of hardware and hardware only.

Now, this is quite the wrong policy to adopt. Although the enquiry refers to soap, there is no reason why the applicant should not require, if not immediately, at some future date, a supply of pots and pans, kettles or cutlery, either to cut

up the soap, store the soap, or boil the clothes which the soap has been responsible for washing. If not he himself, one of his friends. The proper course, therefore, is to forward one of your own catalogues with a covering letter, explaining that, although you have a mighty respect for soap in every form—esteeming, as you do, that cleanliness is next to godliness—yet you are unable to quote him for the reason that, life being short and competition keen, you are obliged to stick to your particular line, which is hardware. You may then add, probably to your future advantage, that, knowing Messrs. So and So or Such and Such are manufacturers of the item he requires, you have forwarded the enquiry on to them for attention. In conclusion, you should point out that you enclose one of your own catalogues, for reference purposes, and will be pleased to give your prompt attention to any enquiries with which he may favour you in the future.

By doing this you bring down not two, but three, birds with the one stone. You sow the seeds for future business for yourself; you cause the applicant to feel good by reason of your responsiveness to his needs, and you give the glad hand to another firm in your own country who, you may be fairly sure, will return the courtesy should a similar occasion arise, but when the cases are reversed.

It is surprising how few manufacturers deem it worth while to send catalogues freely—in some cases even when asked for them, and very rarely

indeed when not asked. Time and again buyers abroad have complained to me on this point, evidencing their remarks by giving the names of various houses to whom they have written, fully stating their requirements and receiving, more often than not, in reply, a few curt lines observing that the manufacturer has nothing suitable to offer. Many firms will think nothing of spending hundreds of pounds in newspaper advertising at home, but they fight, very frequently, absurdly shy of sending out a few catalogues, costing at most a few pence each, abroad. As a matter of fact, a catalogue in the right hands carries far more advertising value than even the much belauded front page of the *Daily Mail*. For whereas one is evanescent, and is probably used—though, as a means, it leaves a lot to be desired—for lighting the dining-room fire the following morning after issue, the other is, in a very large number of cases, kept for reference. Another very important point is this: although it is not feasible to expect the export or foreign sales manager or his staff to be au fait with every foreign language, it is a perfectly easy affair for the department to obtain translations from any of the better class bureaus who handle that class of business. It should, therefore, be taken as an axiom that, under no circumstances must a reply to an enquiry be sent except in the language in which the application was couched, or at least in a language current in the country from which it has emanated. Until quite recently

German was the language most used in Russian business circles. This language is now taboo, and French has, to a great extent, taken its place. You will, therefore, be fairly safe in replying to an enquiry from Petrograd or Moscow in the latter language, but, in the case of letters received from the minor towns, Little Russia and Siberia, Russian only should be adopted.

The simplest way of dealing with such cases, if you are not handling too many lines, is to have a number of letters run off on a duplicating machine. The phraseology can be standardised, and a couple of hundred copies of each in, for example, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese, should be kept by you. The matter of filling in the dates and discounts is an easy one, and can be attended to when making use of the letters. The exact form will naturally vary according to the commodity dealt in.

There is one other very important point to bear in mind, which is, that it is equally a waste of time to send a catalogue printed in English if the applicant is not thoroughly conversant with the language.

On the other hand, it is occasionally not feasible to have lists printed in more than two or three languages. The solution of the difficulty, therefore, is to have a brief résumé on a single or double sheet, cut the same size as the catalogue page, of the prices and models printed in those languages you may deem necessary. If this is done, the supplementary list can be slipped into

the catalogue itself when despatching. Not only will the procedure facilitate business, but the firm to whom it is sent will appreciate the fact: (1) you are evidently doing an extensive business, particularly if you inadvertently send sheets in two languages; (2) that he can order what he wants with some possibility of getting the exact model or grade for which he indents. The cost of the printing is quite reasonable, and there are several firms who are capable of setting matter, and correcting it if necessary, in pretty nearly every language under the sun. Messrs. William Clowes and Sons, Ltd., Duke Street, S.E., have, I believe, founts of type of every description, ranging from Yiddish to Sanscrit.

In concluding the question of dealing with enquiries, it might be as well again to emphasise the following points regarding the handling of foreign correspondence :—

(1) Reply to all letters promptly.

(2) Give the fullest possible details in answer to all enquiries.

(3) If you are not yourself manufacturers of the article required, give the name of some firm which *can* supply, and pass on the enquiry.

(4) Do not omit to send catalogues and price lists, even if you are asked for something you do not stock.

(5) Reply in a language that the applicant will understand.

(6) And, lastly, follow up your enquiries until you either obtain the business or are satisfied that the reason it has passed you is a good one.

CHAPTER IV

THE EXPORT DEPARTMENT—*continued*

THE generality of business houses hold that all letters should be addressed to the firm and not to private individuals, and in this they are undoubtedly within their rights. Letters addressed to the individual, unless of a private nature—when they should not be sent to the office—are apt sometimes to be held up in the event of the addressee being away, with the result that an important deal may be lost or some far-reaching instructions be neglected. On the other hand, personal rapport is one of the largest factors in business success. The foreign sales manager is—or should be—personally known to all his foreign buyers who have offices or representatives in London, and at least eighty per cent. of those who live abroad.

(That is one of the reasons why the foreign manager or a representative from his department should make a tour of his territories abroad at least once in every five years, and preferably every three. It is only by so doing that the ideal business relationship can be kept up and conditions properly studied.)

Granting, therefore, that this personal rap-

prochement exists, it is difficult to preserve the hard-and-fast rule regarding the addressing of correspondence. Human nature will out even in business and despite the decay of the "Cheeryble Brothers" type of house in favour of the less soulful limited company.

Consequently, if John Winkle, of Winkle, Winkle & Co., Calcutta, has some time fraternised with Thomas Gubbins, of Carterson, Pilk & Co., of Bradford, he will naturally feel that the appeal direct is going to obtain better attention than the appeal devious. His supposition may or may not be correct, but the fact remains that it persists and will continue to persist so long as human nature holds sway. In addition, the "damn" hot and personal, delivered in a friendly spirit, is far less conducive to strained relations between two business houses than the "damn" cold and impersonal, and this is to the firm's benefit, for this reason: In the first case, the recipient can reduce it to its proper value and make allowances, knowing the pronouncer of the malediction, and, when replying, can use the personal note to ease, tactfully, the situation.

In the latter case, the curse, addressed to the firm at large, has the unfortunate habit of growing, snowballwise, in its descent from the head to the lesser members, culminating, possibly, in an extremely unpleasant day for the wholly blameless office boys. In its course, it will have ruffled various tempers in corresponding various degrees.

The manager in chief will have suffered five minutes' irritation because the complaint has made him feel his subordinates are not to be trusted. His immediate deputy will have to cope with the effect of the originator's wrath *plus* that of his chief. It is safe to assume, too, that its balefulness will be trebled in the case of the third party on whom it falls. And by the time it reaches the aforementioned office boy it will have obtained the proportions of a "doom"—frightful and blasting.

As the office boy, if for no other reason, has an emotional and tender nature, with correspondingly high and romantic ideals (bred of the literature upon which office boys are fed), and as, moreover, every office boy may be a managing director in embryo—providing due encouragement be given—it is only common humanity to see that no more "dooms" occur to crush his burgeoning tendencies than are actually and rightly his.

Not only this, but in nine out of ten cases the actual misdemeanant is the one person who escapes.

A little licence, therefore, in the matter of the addressing of letters is wise. *But* it should be made a rule by the sales manager himself that, in the event of his absence, his assistant, or someone responsible in the department, must open such letters and, if necessary, give them immediate attention.

It is not only in the matter of complaints, but also where quotations are concerned, that the

"personal equation" is considerably more effective The calm and uplifting "six-sheet, three-colour" announcement that "Puffin's Soap is the Best," even though it may nearly fill the hoarding, will not carry half the appeal that a single sheet in monochrome will obtain by the statement that "*You* have pimples—use Puffin's Soap and cure them." It is quite conceivable that you never had a pimple in your life, yet your hand will be almost certain to stray to your chin in order to find out if the slight irregularity you encountered whilst shaving *was* only an irregularity. The particular psychology of advertising will, however, be dealt with further on; the present digression is merely to illustrate my brief for the cultivation of the best possible understanding between buyer and seller, even though this may, in some wise, interfere with the principles of the house.

It is well to remember that letters, except where lawyers are concerned, are only a substitute for a personal chat. No man, unless he be a pedagogue, ever succeeded in convincing his fellows by adopting the "Editorial We" stunt. It is the thoroughly interested, and consequently *interesting*, brimful of humanity man who, convinced himself, and, therefore, full of the power of convincing others, carries his arguments —and sales.

In organising your sales department, therefore, recollect this. Consider, also, that it is not a capacity for detail—though that counts; nor a punctilious routine, though that counts too—but

a capacity for bringing about personal rapport, that goes furthest in getting new customers and retaining them.

The subject of letters naturally leads to the question of stenographers. Typists, like all other commodities, vary considerably. The best, undoubtedly, for ordinary business, is of the female persuasion. A male typist, one who has been at the work ever since his business début, and who has not succeeded in getting any more forward after, for example, a year or two, is unnatural. There is something about him that makes one think of eunuchs and jelly-fish. He invariably has cold hands and vegetarian tendencies. Now, these do not go with esprit de corps, and esprit de corps is one of the most important qualities in your office staff. If a female typist lacks it, you can usually stimulate the sense by a little judiciously applied flattery. As a general rule, the more vain the stenographer the more jealous is she of the department's well-being. A typist has a hard life—her fingers develop "nerves," and she wants treating like a child. It is advisable to cultivate the ambition in her to think for herself—though this is not always an easy matter.

The typing and lay-out should be neat, but neatness can be carried too far. Some typists have a rooted objection to making corrections; rather than do so they will re-write a letter entirely, even if it be only the last "l" in "faithfully" that is blurred. The result is that the

letter takes twice as long to turn out—to say nothing of the waste of paper. Efficiency is every bit as desirable in typewriting advices as it is in forwarding the goods themselves. If a typist can turn out forty letters a day, it means that each is costing approximately 1½d. to 2d. each, exclusive of material. But 6d. or even 4d. is too much to pay even for acknowledging a thousand pounds cheque.

If business is slack, her time can be profitably occupied in getting out a few "form" letters. It is a very easy matter to have dates, names and addresses filled in when required, and time is often saved during a rush period by having some form letters ready. If more than three typists are employed, it is advisable to have a senior to oversee them. No mere man, unless he has been brought up as a shop-walker or a slave-driver, has the time and energy to waste in straightening out feminine amenities *in* as well as out of business hours.

Another particular item in the routine of the sales department is the preparation of catalogues. A price list that contains too much information is almost worse than one that contains it in the proportion affected by the currants in cheap spice bread.

A general description of each item should be given first with a good block—line or process. (Electros should be ordered at the time the blocks are made, for despatch to those agents abroad who either issue a list of their own or who want

them for newspaper advertising—in which case, of course, they should be of a much coarser screen.)

Next should follow a specification dealing with the salient points of each commodity, and the final details should comprise particulars as to price, gross and net weights—*i.e.*, packed and unpacked, and, where feasible, cost of delivery f.o.b. London or Liverpool. This last point is not absolutely essential, as it will be embodied in the letter accompanying the list when sent out.

When catalogues are issued, uniformity of cover and design with size and shape should be preserved. The tendency during the past few years, particularly in some lines, has been towards over-elaboration. Probably the enhanced cost of paper and postage will militate against this for the future. The loose leaf catalogue—on the general system embodied in ledgers and note-books so much nowadays—is one which can be made to effect a considerable saving, as the covers can be designed to be always up to date, and the contents added to or reduced as occasion requires. In regard to the illustrations, colour printing has made such marvellous progress of late years that colour "cuts," where advantageous, will well repay the small extra cost. I was shown some furniture and automobile catalogues in Russia, sent out by German firms, that were absolutely an artistic treat. The possibilities when, say, carpets or woven tapestries are being dealt in

are enormous. A catalogue giving the various designs in colour would sell the stuff with half the effort that would be required where an ordinary monochrome catalogue is issued. The loose leaf system can be applied with equally beneficial effect—the sending out of an extra sheet or page showing, perhaps, a later model offering the opportunity to keep in touch with the agent or prospective customer at a very small expense. It is very advisable to run off an edition of *un*-priced lists after the ordinary edition is printed, as these are most useful to some foreign buyers. Amongst the natives of India, Burmah, China, and, to a lesser degree, amongst the people of Spain, Italy, etc., a catalogue with the home prices shown has a most demoralising effect, causing them to endeavour to buy direct from the factory in the hopes of obtaining a better price than the agent offers. Some manufacturers encourage this species of mail-order business, but it rarely pays, in the long run, if your products are to become a household word abroad. The agent is well worthy of his hire, and to cheat him of his dues after he has, possibly, advertised your wares and created a market for them is every bit as dishonest as removing his watch and chain by stealth. Actually it is ethically worse, because, in the latter case, he can obtain redress by law, and in the former it is denied him.

In some countries the standard of meum et tuum is conspicuously low. It is related, for example, that at a political dinner in one of the

Balkan States, a British diplomat was relieved of his watch and chain during the function. He suspected the Minister for Foreign Affairs, next to whom he was sitting at table, but, naturally, did not like to tax him with the—annexation. Instead, he complained to his host—the Minister of Justice.

"Dear, dear," remarked the latter, very upset. "The Minister for Foreign Affairs! He shouldn't have done that. Never mind; I'll get it back for you."

Later on in the evening, true to his word, he handed it over to the diplomat.

"What did His Excellency say?" demanded His Majesty's plenipotentiary, after thanking his host.

"Hush!" returned the latter, looking round furtively to where the Minister for Foreign Affairs was drinking a glass of champagne. Then in a confidential whisper came the explanation—"He doesn't know I've got it."

This story is given merely to indicate that climatic conditions in some regions render it practically impossible to refrain from finesse, shall we term it, so that the agent himself is not always irreproachable. A sliding scale of prices—fifty per cent. over standard for the well-to-do and fifty per cent. under for the less aristocratic client—may be very gratifying to the customers and to the agent, who thus increases his sales and makes up on the swings what he loses on the roundabouts, but it is not to the interest of the

manufacturer. It is well for the foreign sales department to keep a finger on the consumer's pulse, and if it accelerates too rapidly with joy at bargain prices, or retards greatly through dissatisfaction at overcharges, the department should seriously consider a change of agents.

Another matter which is very often the cause of trouble and difficulty is the question of replacements or repairs under guarantee—in the case of machinery—and breakages, faults in manufacture, wrong matching of colours and varieties in quality, where piece goods, gloves, silks, china and a host of other articles are concerned. Each manufacturer makes his own rules regarding the liabilities he is disposed to assume in connection with claims under the above counts. Some are exceedingly generous, some quite the reverse. It is occasionally very difficult, especially when the buyer is, perhaps, several thousands of miles away, to prove whether or no the claim is a just one.

An agent may hold, for example, that certain items, although invoiced, have not been received. (It is rarely that complaints occur respecting surpluses.) Enquiry elicits the fact that the goods were checked out at the factory, and that a clean receipt was obtained from the railway company. Even so, actual proof is as far off as ever.

The matter resolves itself eventually into a question of your man's word against that of your agent on the other side. If you give way, you will lose money, providing that the goods *were*

despatched; if you do not, your agent becomes dissatisfied and probably sulky. It is almost analogous to the series of tragi-comic problems which appeared some years ago in *Vanity Fair*, dealing with fictitious social amenities under the title, "What would A. do?"

If, of course, your stock is so well kept and tabulated that it is only a question of simple subtraction, *i.e.*, what is booked out plus what remains balanced against what the factory has sent into the stores, you can satisfy *yourself*, though it may be at the expense of your customer. In this case it only remains for you to decide whether it is best worth while to give way and keep him happy. If, on the other hand, you cannot prove it satisfactorily to yourself, and equally you cannot prove that the railway or shipping company is the malefactor, you are practically compelled to give your client the benefit of the doubt. In any case, unless you can produce irrefutable proof of delivery to the shippers, it is advantageous, when the loss is not too considerable, to meet the agent at least half way. The proper account against which to debit such losses is the advertising appropriation, for, actually and truly, an agent rendered contented and happy is worth at least two whole-page advertisements even in the august *Times*. But care must be exercised to prevent such claims becoming a habit. The tropics are notoriously deleterious to the morals; so also are some other regions—Russia, for instance, and the Argentine. If, there-

fore, the custom appears to be growing, a firm stand should be taken without delay.

Advertising is yet another of the problems with which the foreign sales department is confronted. In a great many cases the allocation is deputed to the advertising department proper, which deals with the home and foreign appropriations en masse. This is all very well in its way, especially if there is a good man at the head, but even the most experienced advertisement manager who has not studied the local conditions will be probably less effective than a foreign sales manager who knows the territories to be worked up. There are press guides in plenty—Sells's is one of the best—but the leading paper in a certain city is not always the one from which the best results are obtained.

Here, then, is where the man who has *been* and *seen* scores—that is, if he has kept his eyes open. He knows exactly the medium which appeals most to the Indian "bannia" and "nawab," the Chinese "compradore" and "mandarin," the Russian "moujik" (when the latter can read) and "barin," the Sydney "larrikin" or wealthy "squatter," and the many other types of buyers of higher or lower degree whose attention it is desired to captivate.

He knows, or should know, also the kind of setting and wording which will appeal; whether or no blocks can be used—in fact, the particular form of psychology that the locality demands.

By all means let the control be given over

to the advertising department proper, but give, too, the man whose interest it is to obtain sales some say in the matter.

Very often advertising managers are as temperamental as the fifth row chorus lady who has been given a line to speak for the first time, and woe to anyone who has the misfortune to offend their artistic sensibilities.

The real fact of the matter is that any person with a little common sense, an eye for effect, and a knowledge of human nature can turn out every bit as " telling " an " ad." as the expert. Where the latter scores is in his inner knowledge of rebates, opportunities afforded when space is " easy," and a fine capacity for making the most of that knowledge. By all means have an advertising manager if it gratifies your pride, but a really good agency—if you wish to be spared the constant friction of distributing matter, correcting proofs, and having line drawings prepared and blocks made—will, as a rule, do the work quite as efficiently and more cheaply. In a number of cases the foreign advertising is handed over to the local agent—I am referring principally to the advertising of proprietary articles—and an allowance or special discount given to cover the cost. It is as well in such cases to arrange for voucher copies of newspapers containing the advertisements to be sent you. Not only does this occasionally stimulate the agent's activities, but it often gives you possession of useful data regarding the movements of your competitors.

In advertising, just as on the stage, " action " is what is required. If you are selling a hair-restorer, and cannot arrange for half-a-dozen bald men to be treated in a shop-window with the preparation daily, or, contrariwise, expose to view the same number of maidens with luxuriant tresses, the next best thing is an advertisement as nearly as possible conveying the action. If you want to appeal, for example, to the masses, a series of cartoons issued daily depicting the adventures of a man with a single hair, and the coaxing out of the " follicles " of some younger brothers, would probably be effective. For the classes, two square inches of type setting forth the name, the place where it can be obtained, and the price (the more inflated the cost the better) will carry conviction. The intense, high-brow " ad."—like America, too proud to say much—has wonderful selling powers amongst a certain species of reader. Its modesty and the expensive white margin lead to the conviction that it must be good.

In the States, the moving advertisement or sign is the principal attraction. I should imagine it will soon defeat its own ends on the principle that, in a country of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. The only possibilities that were missed, so far as I could see, were by doctors and dentists —the Church and the Law were both represented. But they will come in too, no doubt, and Broadway will be edified by the spectacle of a man in the " parlour " window inserting and taking out

a row of artificial teeth and chewing "gum" and glass or pebbles, to show how excellent they are; whilst, opposite, will be a surgeon operating for appendicitis whilst the patient plays a game of poker to show how easy it is.

The remaining duties of the export department consist chiefly in the filling up of declaration forms for customs purposes—for which there is usually a definite formula for each country—and making arrangements for packing, shipping and insuring the merchandise. The question of negotiating payments need not be gone into here because there are very very few philanthropic houses who will supply their commodities out of brotherly love. In addition, each series of transactions calls for individual methods according to the agency arrangements: some call for cash against bills of lading in Great Britain, some for a draft with order, some for three or more months' credit, and some firms have a branch or concern, empowered to act on their behalf, in the country to which the goods are sent.

Remain, therefore, the questions of packing, shipment and insurance. As regards the first, it is practically impossible to generalise, but it may be taken as a safe axiom that the better the packing, in the case of large articles, and the more attractive it is in the case of small ones, the more satisfaction will be obtained all round. A neat, attractive, well made up parcel rouses the anticipation and *preparedness* to like what it contains better than an ill-favoured one. In the

case of machinery, all bright parts should be carefully smeared with vaseline or a mixture of tallow and white lead. When possible, all goods should be packed at the factory *and* inspected, before being boxed up, by the sales manager or a reliable assistant, to make certain that the indent has been properly executed and the specification adhered to. If your customer has ordered cheddar cheese, and, on arrival of the produce, it is discovered that there *is* no cheese because gorgonzola was shipped by mistake and the mites have suffered from a long-sea-voyage-appetite and only dust remains, there are going to be some excited letters floating around in the near future. Consequently, it is safest to go over each consignment and make assurance doubly sure. Of course, I am not pleading that each individual Quaker groat should be taken up and microscopically examined before despatch, but some kind of inspection is advisable and, in fact, necessary. Where heavy cases are in question, screws should be used instead of nails, even though the cost is a little more—at all events, for the ends and top, so that the contents can be removed as expeditiously as possible. It is a good plan also to give full particulars by letter as to the general construction of the case, *i.e.*, which side or end should be removed first; this will assist the consignee when placing the case, in the event of his having only a limited space at his disposal.

Insurance is another matter on which it is not needful to dwell. Companies can be found

willing to effect assurance against such diverse mishaps as Halley's comet depriving us of our existence and losing the nail of one's small toe. It should be made a rule, however, to have a definite understanding with the consignee regarding the taking out of a policy. Some consignees prefer to make their own arrangements. This is satisfactory so long as the insurance company is reliable and get-at-able. If, for instance, the goods are destined for some remote territory, and, by reason of accident, they should not arrive, the consignors may lose the whole of the value should they not have been paid for before shipment, and the foreign assurance company refuse to allow the claim. Also, the consignee *might* have omitted to insure that particular shipment.

As regards shipping, the leading companies, as a rule, have arrangements whereby the freights for certain localities are standardised, but quotations can be obtained and compared in the ordinary way of business. In the case of small urgent articles, too bulky to be sent by parcels post, a large number of shipping companies will accept these under parcels tickets.

In concluding this chapter, I might add that firms would sometimes save themselves many heart-burnings if they considered carefully the chances of success in a certain field before attempting to bring it beneath the plough. For one thing, it would be scarcely profitable, though it might be extremely enterprising, to send a consignment of mackintoshes to the native in-

habitants of Aden or Arabia, or find a market for locomotives or river steamers amongst the Llamas of Thibet. In some countries, too, they make certain commodities considerably cheaper than any manufacturer in Great Britain can. There is an old saying regarding the futility of sending coals to Newcastle.

If, however, the foreign sales department has any doubts on this latter point, the following formula will possibly solve the problem as to whether or no his commodities stand a chance of success.

Let X equal the local market price of the locally-made article.

Let A equal the lowest price at which it is possible for the home manufacturer to turn out a similar—though of course better, at any rate, from the firm's point of view—article.

Let Y equal the cost of delivery c.i.f. nearest port to the coveted territory, plus duty, if any.

Multiply A and Y together.

If the total, which we will call B, is *much* greater than X, the chances are not worth taking so far as a large sale is concerned. If, however, B is only a little larger or equal to X, the prospects are healthy.

Every man in this degenerate day prefers something made away from his home—if he can get it at the same price, or for even a little more than he has to pay for the local product. That is why a prophet is never really popular in his own country.

CHAPTER V

Countries and Requirements

General

UNLESS a man has actually travelled abroad to a considerable extent, it is practically impossible for him to realise how customs, manners, methods and requirements—even when they have to do with fundamental actions—can vary.

A great many Europeans would scoff at the idea of sawing wood in any other manner than on the down stroke—that is to say, applying the cutting power by pushing the tool. In India, however, amongst the native workmen, just the reverse applies. The cutting is done on the up-stroke, when the tool is being pulled towards the workman, and the teeth of the saw are, in consequence, set and sharpened accordingly.

Eggs, one would naturally surmise, do not vary much in size—so far, at least, as the ordinary product of the hen goes. Yet in India, Burmah, and other parts of the East, the hen's egg is considerably smaller than that of its European sister, being practically only of the dimensions of that laid by the bantam and sometimes even less.

For many years the Anglo-Indian had to

perform a kind of juggling trick when he wished to negotiate a boiled egg, because the latter was so much too small for the cup. The story goes that indents by the score were sent to the British potteries for smaller egg-cups, but no notice was taken. An egg-cup was an egg-cup pure and simple; ornamentation could be obtained according to standard design, but as for altering the diameter and depth—ridiculous!

Eventually a German "commercial" took the matter up, with the result that the "fatherland" secured a monopoly in that particular line for some time after. That, at all events, is the position as narrated by a firm of importers in Bombay, and there is no reason for doubting their word.

Nowadays we view with antagonism the prismatic lustres with which our forefathers were wont to adorn their candelabra and, when gas first came in, their chandeliers. The Hindu and Mahommedan, however, still cherishes a passion for the glittering effects obtained by their use. As a consequence, huge, pear-shaped pendants are to be found in the principal chambers, guest rooms or durbar halls of bannia and rajah alike, from Travancore to Peshawar.

They are only used, as a rule, when the Dewali, festival of lamps, or a nautch party, or a wedding demands a show of ceremonial. Ordinarily they are muffled in swathes of turkey-red or puce muslin, sometimes rendered so black with accumulated dust as to resemble gigantic clusters of swarming bees. Nevertheless, they

are de rigueur and no self-respecting household would be without them.

The Chinaman, who may be deemed a "futurist"—both as regards the design of the article and his desire for preparedness—is not entirely happy unless the coffin, in which he is eventually to be interred, graces a corner of his house. The man with an eye on the main chance has "got in" wherever occasion seemed to offer in respect of most commodities, but I have not so far heard of any firm in this country who has gone into the question of shipping out coffins to the Celestial empire.

In Launceston, Tasmania, a large industry has for its object the capturing, salting down and packing in kegs of the hindquarters of a certain "gull" to be found on some of the islets in the Bass Strait. In flavour, when cooked, it resembles the wing of a chicken fried in company with an assortment of kippered herrings. They are cheap, succulent and, as they contain a quantity of oil, nourishing. Yet, so far as I am aware, their consumption is limited to Tasmania and one or two places on the south coast of Victoria, notwithstanding that they are every bit as much of a bonne bouche as caviare.

These instances could be multiplied ad infinitum, but they will serve to show that there are openings for trade in the oddest things if only the possibilities are studied. Different climatic or territorial characteristics bring about different needs in the form of clothing, food, housing and their

appurtenances. Even the personal craving for amusement is modified by environment much more than by inherent taste.

The equatorial African native has the love of rhythm implanted in his soul to every whit as fine a degree as the regular attendant of the Queen's Hall "Pops"; it is only that his simpler surroundings render him contented with simpler sounds.

In fact, wherever mankind has formed any sort of a community—whether it be in some strange, out-of-the-way oasis of the Sahara or amidst the lush, spilled-over vegetation of the primæval tracts adjoining the Amazon—some species of trade is possible if the local requirements are complied with. The wonder is, not that the list of "trade articles" is so comprehensive as it is, but that it is not even more comprehensive.

The use of the "by-product" is becoming more and more prevalent, but what is really required is an international exchange (or perhaps "clearing-house" would be a better term) which would enable waste to be reduced to an infinitesimal minimum. To a certain extent, the "throw outs" and "cast offs" have been utilised. At the lowest end of the social scale there is the "rag and bone" man, who finds a market for old bottles, sacking, and the hundred and one waste articles of the household. Rejuvenated, boiled or pulped down, some appear later as blotting paper and glue; others, washed and redistributed, carry cordials, medicine or liquors

to the same homes, may be, from which they were originally banished. A little time ago a bright brain "sensed" a use amongst housewives for the threadlike turnings of brass procured at small cost from an engineering factory. Rolled up into a compact ball, they were marketed as a "sauce-pan sponge"—a device with which the residue or deposit coating the utensil after use in cooking could be quickly and efficaciously removed?

The possibilities of employing waste "by-products" or selvage are enormous, when consideration is given to the millions of outlets available for odds and ends ingeniously treated. There is no waste where the law of nature is concerned; why, then, should there be where the law of manufacture applies?

Truth to tell, the American shows a much greater degree of inventiveness in regard to the disposing of these odds and ends than does the Britisher—possibly because the fusion of more nationalities with, in consequence, a greater diversity of view standpoints, has taken place in the evolution of his race. Yet once the hint has been given, the British manufacturer should not have much difficulty in following—even improving on it.

The trouble of life is, to my way of thinking, not so much in finding markets as in finding simple, clean and useful goods for those markets.

Some seasons ago, there was running in London a play in which the hero was one Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford, gentleman of fortune.

He desired to float a company and decamp with the money subscribed—this being apparently the shortest cut to the speedy acquirement of wealth. But even the most hare-brained of investors demand *some* excuse for parting with their money. On the spur of the moment, Wallingford's friend supplied the necessary notion—or excuse. Why not cover the heads of carpet tacks with some material so that they resembled, when in place, the fabric of the carpet itself?

Neither Wallingford nor his accomplice in the gentle art of "bamboozling" ever dreamed for a second that the idea was practicable, nor was anything but a lever to assist in the opening of the prospective shareholders' strong-boxes. They were inordinately surprised, therefore, when there proved to be a demand for the article, and the business, booming to such a degree, enabled them to play a square, instead of a crooked, game. The carpet tack idea, in itself, may not be feasible in practice, but the theory back of it is sound as old oak. That is to say, if something can be produced having novelty and utility combined with simplicity and reasonableness in price, a market can invariably be found for it.

It would not pay individual firms, perhaps, to attempt to create saleable produce out of the unconsidered trifles remaining over after the production of the commodity proper on which they are engaged, but it might be worth their while to keep an eye open for other houses who might be able to use and purchase the wastage. Hence

the desirability of a clearing-house where information regarding such odds and ends could be obtained.

In some cases even it might prove a good investment to start a subsidiary factory—when, for example, the surplus of flotsam and jetsam was very large. It is difficult to give concrete examples without knowing in what form the aforementioned flotsam and jetsam is obtainable. Still, one might cite, in the case of a factory using large quantities of thin and medium sheet brass, the stamping out of curtain rod supports, drawer handles and brass hinge parts, or, in the event of the material being exceptionally thin and the " ends " of very small size, the stamping of cheap accordion and mouth organ reeds. The work could easily be carried out by one or two girls with hand presses, and though the result would not warrant competition with firms equipped specially for the foregoing work, yet the firms in question would possibly be glad to purchase the items manufactured at a better price than that which could be obtained for the scrap in the raw.

As I say, this is possibly an exaggerated suggestion; nevertheless, it is quite feasible that the individual manufacturer could—an' he wished—find some manner of utilising fragments on an economical basis and so reduce his overhead charges.

There is a market for everything somewhere, even if the goods are as far separated as fish scales and human skeletons.

Regarding the psychology of the requirements of the various countries, the general assumption may be made that, whereas a rich country will require larger and more costly objects, the poor country offers an equally profitable market in the matter of cheap and small articles. The former will demand more intrinsic worth, whilst an article that carries the greatest amount of eye-appeal will invoke more attention from the latter.

That is one of the reasons why Germany was so successful in the obtaining of trade.

As already stated in the previous chapter, a well-wrappered or finished article has a better saleable value than a better article which is not so enticingly finished or " done up." And, although the contrary is deemed usually the case, the inferior object, if attractively painted and finished, will, as a rule, last quite as long as the more expensive one, the reason being that it receives more careful treatment on *account* of that more pleasing outward appearance.

Take, for example, a simple, every-day instance in the matter of furniture. With many people—particularly of the working class—a " parlour " " occasional " chair, upholstered in cheap silk and made of hard wood stained to resemble mahogany, will sell more easily than one more soundly turned out of real mahogany, upholstered in better and more durable material, and costing only an inappreciable amount more, but, of course, not so " showy " as the first cited. By all the laws of logic the cheap article should last only

half the time of the latter. But, in practice, such is not the case, for the reason that more care is bestowed upon the " attractive " piece. The mistress of the house arranges it somewhere so that it will afford the maximum amount of " eye " satisfaction with the minimum amount of wear and tear.

I should be sorry if the foregoing remarks were taken to be a plea for the creation of the cheap and nasty, because they are not so. I only plead that the better quality goods should have the same espièglerie, chic-ness and style—meretricious as these may be—as obtains in the articles " made to sell."

This extremely prevalent " lust of the eye " should, therefore, be kept in mind when seeking markets in the East or in any of those countries where brightness and glitter—mentally and optically—are toned down or condoned by the greater strength of the sun.

In the more rigorous countries, on the other hand, where sunshine and shadow blend into one another so that a neutral tint results, the popular desire turns oftener to the solid and durable—the red of bricks as opposed to the scarlet of flame.

It is all just a matter of psychology at bottom, but the psychology of the buyer is one of the most important studies that a manufacturer should undertake, otherwise he will never reach understanding as to why his goods are or are not popular, and how to render them popular.

Another point governing the question of sales of expensive against cheaper goods lies in the currency of the country under consideration. It will generally be found that those countries which have a silver standard and a quantity of paper money, or where gold is not often seen, are more open to launch out than those where a gold standard and very little paper money reigns—this, of course, in regard to normal times.

Thus, in South America, extravagance in the matter of luxuries is most marked, and the same applies to the States, and, in a minor degree, in the cases of Russia and India. A man, as a rule, will give more consideration to the changing of a gold piece than he will to the changing of a soiled and possibly crumpled or frayed " note."

And as, wherever extravagance prevails, there is a collateral of poverty, so will there be a market for both very high and very low-priced goods, but not so much for the medium middle-class objects, except, of course, in small quantities. The requirements of the various countries can again be divided into geographical and ethnological groups, just as are the countries themselves.

The piece-goods business is largest in the sub-tropical and equatorial regions—except where no clothes at all is the fashion—and in such as have inhabitants of a coloured or mixed strain. With the demand for piece-goods goes that of cheap looking-glasses, images, brassware, galvanised iron, cheap grades of hardware, gramophones, automatic pianos, thin woven underwear,

silks, canvas shoes, cheap clocks and elaborate timepieces, mandolins, imitation tortoiseshell combs, flashy finery, and other articles too numerous to mention.

Between 45° and 60° north and south, the demand is more for woollens or heavy fabrics of neutral tints, china and porcelain, bricks and cement, heavy boots, framed prints and articles of vertu, furniture, pianos, automobiles, etc., etc. Machinery, naturally, either agricultural, mining, milling, excavating, electrical or railroad, carries a world-wide appeal, and neither tropic nor arctic conditions have any effect upon its sale. It is, in this case, a question of adapting the products to local conditions.

Neither do the qualities or prices vary to any very great extent, on the whole. It is in conformity to local trading methods, slickness in following up or completeness in relation to quotations, plans and estimates, that one manufacturer will score and another fail.

In agricultural districts, cheap articles of adornment, articles for home amusement, tools, household goods and plain wearing apparel are most in favour; in manufacturing centres, flashy wearing apparel, ornaments, accessories for sport and outdoor amusements, and articles that look well in the shop-window, will be found to obtain greater popularity. These, of course, in addition to the implements and paraphernalia required in the exercise of the type of work prevalent.

A man's or a community's method of amusing

itself invariably takes the form of something offering a complete change of scene and idea from that prevailing in its working conditions. When, therefore, you have the sum of a community's amusements and daily work, it is a fairly easy matter to deduce the type of commodity which will obtain the greatest popularity.

CHAPTER VI

Countries and Requirements

Russia and the Allies

IN order to give a better mental picture of the locality from which she had arrived—or was supposed to have arrived—Charlie's Aunt explained, àpropos of Brazil, that it was the place where the nuts came from. And each one of us, instinctively, at least—unless he has been initiated—is apt to associate a country in our own minds with the special article or product which is supposed, often quite erroneously, to emanate from it.

Occasionally the association of ideas is bred of judicious and long-continued advertising of certain proprietary articles. The mention of Melton Mowbray, for instance, conjures up the thought of pork pies; Bath, of buns; Kidderminster, of carpets; and Devonshire, of cream.

Further afield we associate Italy with olives and wine; Holland, with cheeses; Sweden, with matches; Norway, with timber; and Russia, with a sweet-smelling leather and an antithetically pungent scented caviare. The parallels serve as a species of mnemonics.

Unfortunately, however, we are often led to form quite a wrong idea of a region or place by

thus attributing to it certain characteristics which we consider, in our minds, should apply on account of a particular commodity being connected with it.

Italy, to some, conveys the idea of perpetual sunshine, vineyards and olive-skinned maidens working in the fields to the music of "Funiculi—Funicula," played upon tinkling mandolins. Holland provokes a mental picture of white-bonnetted, clog-shod, rosy-cheeked Dutch girls continually occupied at the cheese press. Sweden would seem to be one huge match factory, and Russia a vast territory where Cossacks devoted their days to tanning and the curing of sturgeon roes.

We even go so far as to form a bird's-eye concept of the people, their dwellings, habits and ideals—all based upon a more or less logical reasoning that the pursuit of certain callings must inevitably mould their followers to our preconceived pattern.

The notions or concepts are very often correct in essentials so far as they go; the trouble is that there are more types than we have considered when forming our deduction. For example, the word "navvy" is invariably associated with muscularity of frame, beer, broken clay-pipes, corduroys, and tenement dwellings, the panes of whose windows are usually broken and stuffed with rags. That there exist navvies who might conceivably be teetotallers, non-smokers, wear tail coats after working hours, and cherish a passion for life in a country cottage, rarely enters our calculations.

In the same manner the word "miller" provokes a mind-picture of flour-coated garments—we do not consider that many men own mills who do not work in them; "sweep," of something perennially nigrescent, and "mechanic," of a being whose nigritude is little less permanent.

The only really thorough way of removing these wrong conceptions is to visit the people or places personally, or, if this is not practicable, to read the best treatises on them obtainable. Europe is a somewhat peculiar continent, commercially, as it embodies within its area—the divisions being, as near as possible, in the direction of the cardinal points—the trade characteristics of the Orient and the Occident, the semi-tropical and the semi-arctic.

In Eastern Russia the demand is for articles most similar to those required for the Orient, especially in the matter of bright hues and bizarre designs.

In the West of Europe, the markets are very similar to our own.

In the North—Scandinavia—luxury gives place to a desire for hard wear, simplicity and neutral tints. In the South—bordering the Mediterranean—a love of colour and, to a certain extent, meretriciousness predominates.

If, therefore, we examine the general trend of requirements in accordance with these four—possibly somewhat arbitrary, but none the less sufficient—divisions, we shall get a very fair idea of the type, class and quantity of merchandise

most in demand. As also that which is farthest away from us is usually the least familiar, and as, in this case, Russia is the largest and, at present, most important market that offers us new possibilities, we will deal with her first. Until quite recently—the beginning of the war, to be precise—the bulk of the trade with Russia was in the hands of Germany. The followers of Nietzsche—the supposed forthcoming "supermen"—partly through geographical proximity and partly by means of endless campaigning, had obtained a hold on the country's commerce with which, even when the war ends, it will take us all our time to compete.

In the case of a large country possessed of very little sea-coast, it is only natural that the inhabitants should be more inclined to agriculture than towards manufacture. Huge districts, each containing many hundreds of square miles and the natural features of which manifest a monotonous sameness, do not tend to breed a desire for travel, particularly where the masses as opposed to the classes are concerned. Short journeys offer very little variety in scenery or company, and long ones, even though the railway has linked up many portions of the country, are usually too expensive, except for the rich landowners.

When is added the traditional "serf system," which has the effect of more or less tethering villagers to a certain locality or estate, it can readily be realised that the general tendency of the population lies in extreme rusticity. The Baltic provinces and the neighbourhood of Odessa,

Petrograd and Moscow, and one or two other large centres, are devoted to commerce ; but the remainder of the country is as yet unexploited. Numerous fairs (Yarmarka)—that of Nizhni Novgorod being the most famous—and the Zemstvo institutions provide, therefore, practically the only opportunities for the sale of commodities or for introducing merchandise on any extensive scale, so that trade, in Russia more than in most countries, is dependent upon the efforts of the commercial traveller.

It is in this particular method of introducing her wares that Germany has, until lately, scored so heavily. The methods of commercial travellers of various nationalities will be examined in another chapter, it being sufficient to remark here that, where Russia is concerned, the sending out of a first-rate foreign representative, with a knowledge of French, German and, if possible, Russian and plenty of samples, is the best manner in which British manufacturers can start business. Even if the first trip does not result in many orders being taken, a great amount of the most valuable information will be obtained which is bound to be of use at a later period. There are, of course, numerous Russian firms who will express themselves willing and anxious to take up agencies, but the results are rarely entirely satisfactory unless they are under the immediate supervision of the manufacturer or his representative.

The Russian will never buy unless he can first see and examine the goods or an actual sample of

them. Also he fights shy of purchasing foreign goods from one of his own compatriots, for the reason that he invariably feels he is paying too much, and that the Russian importer is making an enormous profit at his expense.

Owing to the activities of the country being, in the main, agricultural, and the farmers and landowners being dependent on the sale of their crops for the wherewithal to purchase outside commodities, a long period of credit is usually demanded and granted.

As, therefore, the British manufacturer has a rooted, and undoubtedly reasonable, objection to giving long credits, he would appear to be between the devil and the deep sea as regards the obtaining of business. For, if he sells to a Russian merchant in one of the large towns, he may possibly be able to stipulate for cash, but the chances of a satisfactory business are small and uncertain, inasmuch as the merchant will certainly go elsewhere for his supplies if a better offer affords, whereas, if he attempts to deal direct with the consumers or smaller merchants, he has either *got* to give credit or lose the business.

At first sight, then, the situation would seem impossible, but there are two ways by which the difficulty may be overcome after, of course, preliminaries have been effected in the matter of getting into touch with the buyers and making known to them the species and quality of goods available through the instrumentality of the foreign representative.

The first is by negotiating the business with the aid of one of the fairly numerous Russian trading banks or with the Zemstvo institutions; the second is by opening up a branch in Petrograd, Moscow, or one of the large towns. The latter, if the goods offered are of general appeal, such as linens, cottons, tools and hardware, machinery, wearing apparel and chinaware, is undoubtedly the best. For, by this method, not only is it possible to cope with the city demand first hand, but it affords the opportunity to obtain direct and constant touch with the Zemstvos.

These latter, it may be mentioned, are institutions which purçhase goods, usually for cash, for re-sale to the peasants and landowners—mostly on credit terms.

The Russian, as a rule, has not a very high opinion of the capabilities of his fellows where commerce is concerned. One or two have explained the difficulty to me by stating, *àpropos* of appointing sub-agents in various centres, that "if you get a Russian who is a really good salesman, he will be more than likely to cheat you, and if he is not a good salesman you will lose anyway."

This may be rather a harsh diagnosis, but I have found that the Russian has invariably more confidence in the manufacturer himself, especially when that manufacturer or his representative is an Englishman.

The real fact of the matter is that the Russian, not being commercially minded himself, is unable

to understand the commercial mentality in others. He has little sense of time—the word "zaftra" (to-morrow) is almost as pat to his tongue as "mañana" is to the tongue of the South American Nothing puts him out. "Nichego" (nichevo, *i.e.* never mind) is the only comment he makes if events take an unforeseen or awkward turn, and yet he has ingrained in his nature the distrust which is the birthright of those who live in a narrow groove.

On the other hand, he is kindly, good-natured, cheery, hospitable and, in his own way, intensely persevering. The possibilities of his country, despite the bleakness of some parts, are enormous. And granted the right manner of approach, he will be as fine an ally in the commercial field as he has been on the field of battle.

As is probably well known, Russia enforces the payment of duty upon practically everything sent into the country. Unlike the more general tariff systems, however, the amount payable is not calculated on an "*ad valorem* percentage," but on the weight of the goods, except in the case of automobiles, the duty on which is calculated according to the seating capacity.

The scales in connection with the various commodities are too complicated to enter into here, but manufacturers interested can find all the information they require in the translation of the New Russian Customs Tariff (reference number, Cd. 7854), which is published as a Parliamentary publication and can be obtained from

the usual agents. The pood and funt are used throughout as a standard of weight, the latter equalling about 14 ounces avoirdupois and the former approximately 36 pounds.

Certain formalities in the matter of obtaining a licence have to be complied with when commercial travellers are sent into the country—an annual trading licence, costing 150 roubles, and a personal licence, costing 50 roubles, being required. Should the traveller, however, apply for the trading licence in his own name, the personal licence is unnecessary.

As regards requirements, for which there is bound to be a considerable sale after the war, I should place machinery of all kinds as being the most promising. But it will be necessary for good stocks to be available in the principal centres, so that intending purchasers may see and examine the goods. In addition, where machinery is concerned, owing to the heavy duty and the calculation of same being made upon the weight of goods, it might be desirable for manufacturers to export only those parts of a complicated nature from home, having the bed-plates, bases, and all the more bulky and simple parts made in the country. They could arrange to have this done for them by their agents, if they cannot consider the question of opening up themselves in Petrograd or Moscow; although the best method, of course, would be to start a branch factory for founding, assembling, etc., under their own control.

It should be noted that, in most cases, it is

necessary to obtain Imperial sanction for the establishment of British companies in Russia.

The automobile industry is another which is bound to see rapid development, in view of the widespread use which has been made of motor-cars of all kinds for military purposes, and the consequent publicity obtained from the same. The demand is for a strong vehicle of moderate h.p.—20 to 25—with extra strong springs and an ample ground clearance. The roads are villainous, and, even in Petrograd and Moscow, stone setts, with an anything but even surface, predominate as a means of metalling.

The chemical industry offers a large outlet, but unless the British manufacturers tackle the proposition with more enterprise than they have hitherto shown, the Germans will secure the bulk of the Russian trade again, notwithstanding popular feeling favouring the Allies.

There is a big market also for textiles, boots and shoes, china and porcelain, and an excellent opening for household utensils of enamelware; novelties on American lines would be particularly successful. Amongst the younger generation, for what reason I could never discover, everything American or of American pattern has a strange fascination. In the gymnasia and colleges, numbers of the students make quite a cult or hero-worship of the Yankee characteristics, wearing American boots, square-shouldered American-cut coats, etc., etc. I was only surprised that they had not instituted baseball as a national game.

As a matter of fact, nearly £16,000,000 worth of American goods were imported into Russia during 1914.

To recapitulate, the principal difficulties with which British manufacturers have to contend are the long credit system and their previous inertia in organising a really effective campaign. Not only Russia, but Siberia, offers untold opportunities; but it will be necessary for those who wish to make good to open up themselves in the country, and, by personal influence, persuade the Russian buyers that their wants are going to be properly catered for. It is simple waste of time writing letters—giving quotations f.o.b. British port, instead of c.i.f. Petrograd or Moscow—and expecting the Russian buyer to tie himself into a knot in his eagerness to enter into relations with Great Britain. Unless, therefore, we are prepared to act on the advice of Miss Dombey and "make an effort," the hoped-for boom in Russian trade will fizzle out in exactly the same manner as burst the South Sea Bubble. To alter the character of the moujik so that he will conform to our ideas would be to undertake the re-modelling of the whole social system of Russia and, in addition, to guarantee that the weather conditions on which good crops, and, consequently, prompt payments depend, should preserve the uniformity only attained to by the solar system, expensive chronometers and a healthy appetite. In these circumstances, there would not appear to be much to be hoped for in the matter of regenerating the

moujik; consequently, it is a case of honourable manufacturers combining together, and, if one firm does not care to stand the racket, the opening up by a group of a house in the capital, from which the various sub-agencies, under its own control, can be directed. There is one thing certain, and that is that the thousands of Germans interned in Russia and Siberia are not wasting their time. Many will be learning the language and considering the best manner in which to get back their old trade, with a little surplus to make up for lost time. Therefore, though our ally, the Bear, may be more than ready to offer us the "glad paw," we shall start considerably handicapped even at best, and unless an organised and persistent campaign be instituted, the handicap will become heavier each day after peace is declared.

The Russian is a bad hater; he is too easy-going, too like ourselves, to brood long over an injury. In addition, he prefers to follow the line of least resistance, wherever possible. It is in these facts, therefore, that our danger, commercially, at all events, lies.

Germany made the purchase of goods easy—so easy that Russia is not *very* likely to wish to increase her difficulties if she can help it.

Spain and Portugal

It is somewhat sad to reflect how two countries who, in their zenith, held a considerable amount of world-power, have fallen, if not exactly upon evil days, far behind in the race with life.

The reaons which have brought the decline about are, no doubt, constitutional, just as the reasons which originally made for their ascendancy were geographical.

A large extent of sea-coast has always led a nation dowered with it into adventurous ways. And when is added a position of such geographical excellence as that possessed by Spain and Portugal with the Mediterranean, the coasts of France and North and West Africa in such close proximity, it is not to be wondered at that in the earlier days of maritime traffic they held a unique position.

One of the first treaties of later historic times was that between ourselves and Portugal. India and South America were colonised by them before ever we had turned our ambitions seriously in the direction of oversea possessions. And, at one time, their ships were almost as much the subject of the world (as it was then known) comment as are ours to-day. The explanation of their retrogression and of our progression is, I think, that their climatic conditions, even had they possessed the necessary stocks of coal and iron, were against their ever becoming manufacturing nations, whereas ours were and are exceptionally favourable. Consequently, whilst we used our sea traffic to a large extent in bringing home raw materials to be made up, using the self-same ships to deliver the finished products abroad, Spain and Portugal deemed of small account any raw materials which did not consist of gold, silver, precious stones or other

intrinsically valuable products. It is related that several of the West Indian islands—and probably other territories too—were left alone simply because, when the exploring party went ashore, a negative answer was returned to their enquiry as to whether the country afforded any gold or silver.

The race, in the long run, will undoubtedly be to the nation who, possessed of a mercantile marine for carrying purposes, has, at the same time, natural resources in the matter of foodstuffs sufficient for export purposes. The rates of exchange may fluctuate—civilised countries cry for machinery, gramophones, motor-cars, chemicals, pottery or what not—but, back of all, the real wealth lies in the produce which affords food and clothing.

Specialisation is the order of the day now. Our machinery, at the present moment ranks high, as does also our hardware, brassware, and numerous other products. But each day the competition grows more keen.

America can produce and utilise her vast natural resources in the production. Germany *was* making inroads into our markets and Japan has even now taken up the running.

It behoves us, therefore, unless we wish to see ourselves relegated eventually to the position of a back number like Spain or Portugal, to take time by the forelock and put our (export) house in good order.

Climate and possibly an inherent natural bent

has given us a practically unapproachable advantage in the production of textiles and woollens. It remains for some far-sighted statesman or group of manufacturers to so organise these two industries as to render our position in *them*, at all events, absolutely unassailable. We have the colonies and possessions capable of supplying us with the raw products; we have the ships to carry those materials, but where one mill now exists, where so many thousand spindles or looms, there should be erected quadruple that number.

It this were done, and a really efficient movement set on foot to realise at the same time our agricultural possibilities by the application of intensive cultivation, in the light of the aids modern science affords, we should be even better able to cope with a position, should it occur again, such as the past twenty-two months has seen. These remarks, although perhaps scarcely within the scope of the present series of essays, are bred naturally enough out of the contemplation of the mercantile desuetude into which Spain and Portugal have fallen.

Not being in the main manufacturing countries, the principal requirements of the foregoing are of a more or less simple character.

For example, in the case of Portugal, rice and sugar preponderate over practically all other commodities in the proportion of four and three to one respectively, with the exception of goods made of iron, which very nearly approximate in value to the import of sugar.

In both Spain and Portugal there should, however, be quite a fair market for the general goods already indicated as demanded by agricultural countries. Nevertheless, taking the total requirements, one may hazard the opinion that, as in the cases of Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Italy, the future lies not so much in discovering new channels, but in consolidating those already available, and, by increased efforts, in regaining that portion of the trade latterly held by Germany and Austria-Hungary.

Here, again, then, it is a question of supplying, where wanted, a cheaper and more attractively turned out article, instead of the more sober and intrinsically valuable one.

The demand for what is considered fashionable, both as applied to articles of household use and individual wear, since the advent of cheap printing and excessive advertising, spreads so enormously and speedily that it is difficult to find a locality, however far away from the beaten track, where the dernier cri (itself or a cheap imitation of it) is not insisted upon.

We have only to glance at the articles exposed for sale in Oxford Street, and compare them with those offered in, say, Mile End or Camberwell, to find an example of this lust for fashion close at hand.

To the untutored eye, the articles would appear almost identical, yet, manifestly, there must be a difference if only to account for the distinction in price. It is in the lessening of this difference,

so far as the eye is concerned, that Germany and Austria have been so successful.

Whilst we, to a large extent, can still claim to supply the Oxford Streets of the world (except in the matter of expensive feminine garb), yet they were beginning to control the "Mile Ends and Camberwells," and it is the latter which, in the long run, are the more profitable.

In addition to the extra initial price, the cost of selling an article in Oxford Street is very considerably greater than that of disposing of a similar *type* of commodity in Mile End, and the same applies to markets the world over. Where Spain, Portugal and Italy are concerned, therefore, the aim of the manufacturer must be akin to that of the conjuror, except that his motto should be "The spickness of the brand retrieves the eye."

Roumania and Greece

Roumania and Greece offer two very valuable fields which it will well repay manufacturers to cultivate.

Whether or no the present war will see either obtaining aggrandisement in the form of extra territory it is impossible at present to say, but that a fillip will be given to commerce is, I believe, indubitable.

Propinquity and, once more, the German thoroughness in regarding no opening of too small account, had procured for them the bulk of the pre-war trade.

The German and Austrian commercial traveller was almost as ubiquitous, and usually a good deal more unpleasant, than the common flea, but the fact remains that he did know his business.

The result is that the market for earthenware, enamelware, cotton-dress materials, boots and shoes, table-linen, ploughs and agricultural machinery, corduroys, cutlery, crockery, glass and chinaware, electric light fittings, and even soap, was principally in the hands of our enemies. All the foregoing are articles which we are well equipped to turn out, and there is no reason at all why we should not gain the bulk of the trade if the various manufacturers are willing to go to a little expense to obtain foothold.

Probably one of the reasons why so much of the trade has slipped by us in the past is that we have hitherto not been able to understand the viewpoint of the smaller buyer. Just as the maid-servant with a couple of shillings to spend will—if she desires to purchase an article for wear other than a hat—spend hours bargaining or seeking a shop where she will get the best value, so do the customers in small or agricultural nations view the purchase of even a gross of kettles as an *event*. The event loses much of its savour when it is compassed through letter writing. But it is a different matter if it can be made to entail a day's or possible two days' verbal negotiation with the commercial traveller on the spot.

Germany has played up to this amiable weakness and we have not—that is the long and short of it.

GENERAL CARGO

A firm in Roumania desired to erect a mill and sent to England for specifications, prices of machinery, building materials, and suggestions.

After several weeks' delay, a rough drawing was sent without any details of prices, etc.—a drawing of a building which was totally unsuited to the purpose for which it was required.

A German firm sent an engineer over to take notes and full particulars on the spot. A week or two after his return to the fatherland, several drawings, with full details giving alternative schemes and ideas, was forwarded with the intimation that, if none of the plans submitted was suitable, they would be pleased to go into the matter again.

Naturally the German house got the contract, which led to further ones, although originally the buyer preferred British goods. This is a true story, related to me by one of the parties in Roumania concerned.

The appointing of a resident agent in the larger towns is the only method to be recommended, as then the outlying towns and districts can be exploited by native travellers under the jurisdiction of the head man on the spot.

The formation of a species of universal agency by a group of manufacturers would probably obtain excellent results with a minimum of individual outlay—if it be considered too expensive or hazardous for one house to take on a place on its own. There is no doubt but that, as already stated, this method could be equally profitably employed for Russia also.

AN INTRODUCTION TO SALESMANSHIP

One of the most difficult things in the world to obtain—although it is one of the most quoted—is co-operation of effort; yet it is one that the British manufacturer must learn to institute if he wishes to make a strong and successful bid for the foreign markets, or those which, as in the above case, offer a small but gradually increasing turnover in a number of small lines, as opposed to a big turnover in one or more important commodities.

A boa constrictor will swallow a goat, but its lengthy period of coma afterwards discounts any advantage it may gain over an ant-eater, which is constantly replenishing its interior economy.

The successful business man is he who, while delighted to supply the boa constrictor, is not too high-minded to remember that the ant-eater's alimentary indents are equally important in the general scheme of life.

CHAPTER VII

Countries and Requirements

Asia

EVER since the beginning of things, the East has always held the greatest amount of fascination and romance for mankind. Although the eyes of the first travellers must have turned instinctively towards the sun's wake—and the march of civilisation has assumed a westward trend—yet the region which apparently gave it birth was wrapped in greater mystery.

Even to-day the East is synonymous with glamour and fantasy. And of all our possessions India is undoubtedly the one in which the lay mind finds the most interest.

The East has everything we lack—or would seem to have. Its products titillate our palates at meal times, adding zest to cold and roast alike. Its colours, despite synthetic dyes, gladden our vision. And even its tropic suns would appear desirable when compared with the mists and fogs of an English winter.

Small wonder, then, that trade with the Indies is one of the principal assets of our world commerce.

The original members of the "Honourable

John Company" builded better than even they knew, and they were none too slow in assessing the possibilities of a market. India is one of the few countries which has disproved the advantages of a preferential tariff. The modest five per cent., which is the average rate of duty imposed on the comparatively few articles compelled to pay an entrance fee, applies whether the goods come from us or from any other source.

The Portuguese enjoyed practically the whole of the Indian trade for more than a century, and they have left a bigger mark on the Empire than probably any nation has ever left on any country before, with the exception of Spain and South America, and is likely to do again.

Although all that remains to them now is a small stretch of land on the west coast—Goa—the Portuguese cognomens have perpetuated and spread to such a degree that there is scarcely a town of any note from Kashmir to Cochin where you will not find a dusky family rejoicing in the name of Pereira or Furtado, Decastro or Da Silva.

They were builders in their time as well—far more so than we are. The ruins of Bassein, close to Bombay, although little known and rarely visited nowadays, can show some fine stalwart walls which even the jungle, powerful vandal that it is, has not been able to efface or level. And within ten miles of Bombay there is a little community of native Catholics which still keeps up the saints' days in all the old style and pomp.

Nowadays the descendants of the old traders—who would appear to have married much, rather than wisely—have come down in the social scale. They are proud of their ancestral blue blood—now blue in a literal as well as a metaphorical sense—but they are not above turning an honest rupee or two by taking domestic service. The Goanese cook is one of the best the country offers, and is a thing of joy so long as you are not over-inquisitive regarding his kitchen and culinary appliances. A thirst for information in the foregoing direction usually leads to a distaste for food for some time afterwards. And the cockroach—the big red-date variety—would seem to regard the Goanese cook in a similar light to that in which the old retainers viewed their feudal barons.

This, however, is by the way.

Modern trade in India, so far as the masses are concerned, tends principally in one direction: cotton fabrics. These include materials with such picturesque titles as camboys, dhooties, loongies (in Burmah), sarongs (in Malaya), sarries, papoons, and pakamans. The names, as a matter of fact, are more varied than the articles themselves. Briefly, as all textile manufacturers are aware, they represent the head coverings, or turban cloths, body drapings for the men and head, bust and waist coverings for the women.

The demand for them is practically insatiable, and until the poles are reversed and the climate of the arctic and the equatorial regions change places, it is likely to continue. In the manner of

their usage—those of the women especially—they resemble most the drapings of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

India is one of the few places where the call of fashion—except in so far as it conforms to caste requirements—falls on deaf ears. Some of the men and women have adopted European dress, but the result is not becoming; whereas the vision of a golden-skinned, full-bosomed Marwarri maiden, with her sun-ray skirt swishing round her silver-braceletted ankles, and her orange sari draped over her head so that it half conceals, half reveals, one mischievously twinkling eye ere it closes to the breast curve, is as near the æsthetic as possible.

There are spinning mills galore in the Bombay neighbourhood, but though these and Japan, Italy and, of course, Germany have essayed to supply the ever-increasing demand, Great Britain is still the largest provider in this direction. And there is no reason why an even greater business cannot be done.

From the humble "ryot"—or cultivator—making a few annas a day, and the sisters, cousins, aunts and other female relatives who share his "busti," to the ruling chief of a native state with all his retinue and following, the sari and dhootie form the two articles of clothing that makes the whole Indian Empire kin.

There are only two exempts: the child whose wants have not yet achieved anything more important than a loin-string and an amulet suspended therefrom, and the rajah or higher class business

man who affects European costume. And even the latter, when "in *sanctum sanctorum*," revert to the purely native attire.

The requirements in this particular line, where India itself is concerned, are so well known that there is little need to enlarge upon them.

In Mysore, Hyderabad (Deccan) and the south, yellows and greens and puces are most favoured for turban cloths for the men and for sarries for the women.

In Bombay, darker reds and whites prevail, and in Northern India—the Punjaub—blues and figured reds; although, in the native states of Jaipur, Udaipur, Bhopal, Rampur, Rewah, etc., brilliant yellows, with red borders and reds with black borders predominate.

Dhooties are almost invariably white, though they may have a narrow black-patterned border amongst the better classes. A native of the coolie class usually carries about with him two turban cloths. And where the European, oppressed by the heat, would take a bath and a total change of linen, the coolie merely rinses out his mouth, removes the headgear he is wearing, and winds on his spare turban. A mouthful of pan and betel concludes his alternative for the European wash and brush up and whisky and soda.

The business in piece goods is mostly what is known as a "bazaar" trade—that is to say, the emporiums devoted to the retailing are situated in the heart of the native bazaars.

Each particular commodity sold claims, as a

rule, a certain street or portion of a road in the bazaar, whole rows of stalls, each vending the same class of goods, being found, and, in some cases, giving the locality its name. Two well-known instances are the cloth bazaar and the copper bazaar in Bombay—devoted respectively to workers in brass and copper and the sellers of cloth; whilst the Chandni Chowk—or bazaar of the silversmiths—in Delhi is famous all the world over. The principal business in India, therefore, lies in the direction of the bazaar trade, and, as such, needs special treatment. European stores cater for the British residents and some of the more wealthy Hindus, Parsis and Mahommedans, who seek distraction from their ennui by purchasing expensive gramophones, clocks, jewellery and ornaments, which are scarcely ever used or looked at after the first few hours; whilst a few Parsi stores in Bombay, and Armenian stores in Calcutta, may claim some custom from the general public; but the full current of commerce flows only in the closely-packed, enervating labyrinths, populated by the Indian masses. It is a case of Mile End and Oxford Street over again, only more so.

The pursuance of the calling of the "box wallah"—the Indian equivalent for the term "commercial traveller"—is usually more intriguing than hygienic, particularly in the cities governed by the British. In the native states proper, the conditions are generally more salubrious, as the ruler is not so burdened with the oversensitive desire

not to interfere with his subjects as is the British Raj. Consequently, when a locality becomes too offensive, he spring-cleans it with fire—and, if necessary, stave or lathi (a long bamboo stick)—and drills a nice air-space through the middle so that the atmosphere can circulate a little.

Just as the temperature of a beehive is several degrees warmer than that of the surrounding atmosphere, and the current of heated air can be felt outside when the fanners are at work, so the proximity of the bazaars can be sensed by the fœtid reek which wreathes out upon the less dense margins. The experienced box wallah can, in fact, locate the quarters he is after, out East, almost entirely by the sense of smell. The dry, stuffy odour of the cloth bazaars; the acrid tang of the cook-shop quarter; the sharper though danker scent of the streets devoted to chandlery and hardware, and the sour, penetrating effluvia which emanates from the premises of the dealers in native tobacco, coarse sugar and grain, are every bit as informing to the man who knows the ropes as any neatly-painted and lettered signboard would be.

This, be it noted, where the Indian and Malayan bazaars are concerned. In China, there is only one all-pervading smell—an awe-inspiring charnel-house chilling fester which penetrates to the very soul; an odour, if one may use so euphemistic a term, which is as unforgettable as it is indescribable.

It is not pleasant to be a box wallah alone,

on business bent, in one of the alleyways of Canton or Pekin, for example. The variety and strength of the odours in Indian bazaars are an excellent index to the amount and multiformity of the business to be accomplished.

The mild Hindu, however self-supporting he may have been in the past, has come to rely upon foreign imports to an almost incredible degree. There are, naturally, a good many articles which he can produce more cheaply and more to his taste than he can buy elsewhere. Thus, for instance, may be mentioned lotahs and dekshies (brass receptacles for native food), jewellery, slippers, furniture, carpets, rugs and some kinds of saddlery—all the foregoing being of native manufacture. Nevertheless, these form a very small proportion of the commodities offered for sale in the bazaars.

In some parts of the East End of London, the coin upon which calculations are most based is the farthing; in the bazaars, the average reckoning of the masses is by the "pie," or twelfth part of a penny. In Hyderabad, an even smaller token is used—the cowry shell.

It can readily be realised, therefore, that the articles vended are bound to be of the cheapest description, so far as household goods are concerned.

The commonest quality of padlocks, looking-glasses (which are, more often than not, distorting mirrors), oleographs, combs, brushes, tin cups, bottles of ink, scissors, knives, bone and

brass studs, garters, imitation gold chains, fountain pens, pearl buttons with shanks and fasteners to enable of their being removed easily, and an *olla podrida* too comprehensive to attempt even to hint at, find a ready sale on the numerous stands, which resemble more the barrows of New Cut in its palmy days than anything else one can call to mind.

Though many of the articles come under the nomenclature of " Brummagem " goods, the majority, at least of late years, have had their birth in Germany and Austria.

The demand for hardware, pails, nails, pans, oil-stoves, hurricane lamps or " butties," chainware, kettles, candelsticks, etc., is scarcely less extensive, but, as a rule, a better price can be obtained comparatively. Arms, too, find a fair outlet, notwithstanding the police restrictions regarding the sale, and these are mostly supplied by America.

For chemicals there is an excellent market, also for patent medicines—particularly those supposed to be a specific for pulmonary complaints —and nerve tonics. The wealthier native is usually a follower of Solomon, and anything that claims to renew his vitality is snapped up eagerly and tried. No doubt the stress of keeping half a dozen wives in order is considerable, even though their chances of getting into mischief are considerably reduced by the purdah system. I knew an enterprising German box wallah in Hyderabad (Deccan) once who supplied every Nawab in

the district with one or more electropathic belts, for which he obtained the most exaggerated prices. He dignified himself with the title of " doctor " for one thing, and he had a wonderfully persuasive tongue and an enormous stock of patience. In addition, there was something that made a mighty powerful appeal to the nobles in question, in the idea that, all day long, they were being charged with a stream of electric vitality against which they could draw as required. The " doctor " had a small incandescent lamp on view which was ostentatiously supplied with current by the belts themselves. Before he thought fit to remove to pastures new, there was scarcely a resident of note for miles around the city who was not cherishing the fond delusion that his lost youth was being restored to him at the rate of a considerable number of ampères per day.

Another article which appeals to the personal vanity of the user, and for which there is a considerable demand (hitherto supplied principally by the Continent), is the accordion, and, in a smaller degree, the portable box harmonium—the bellows of which is worked by the left hand, whilst the right encompasses the playing. Indian music is peculiar. There are gradations of tone, that is to say, " intervals," which are practically undistinguishable to the Western ear, to which they appear as though the vocalist were singing either very sharp or extremely flat. The accordion and the harmonium produce sounds which

blend more nearly with these peculiar "progressions," as executed by the Indian native instruments, than anything of a like nature. In addition, there are no bass harmonies or chords in Indian music, but, by depressing a couple of notes in the bass and keeping them down a "drone" or accompaniment to the runs in the treble can be obtained, which, although extremely unpleasant to the Western ear, has the effect of provoking a frenzy of ecstasy in Indian music-lovers. Whereas the usual method of obtaining the effect is by inserting a wedge to keep down the bass notes, it is probable that an instrument fitted with a device whereby any of the bass notes in octaves or thirds could be kept depressed at will, would find a large market.

The theme, by the way, in Indian music is called the "rag" (not ragtime, though often it is very like it), and it is curious that, when playing a melody in the morning, one note, say C, for example, will be emphasised and played C sharp, whilst, in the evening, the note pointed will be C flat. If, as occasionally happens, the theme is played during a transitionary period—midday or midnight—the two notes C flat and C sharp are struck together or with only the slightest interval of time between them. The starting scale, corresponding to our key of C, is named the "Moorchand of Sah." After hearing a selection of melodies in that particular scale with a German harmonium accompaniment, one is apt to reflect that all is certainly *not* in a name.

Every sixth or seventh shop in the bazaar sells stationery, pens, account books, ink, etc., though the usual form of ledger and day-book used by the native merchant is of a curious shape and size made in the country. Nevertheless, there would seem to be an extensive sale for those of Western design. Playing cards of a cheap make are readily sold, as also are very cheap—and nasty—fountain and stylographic pens.

In the matter of silk goods, the Japanese material is most popular, and there is an enormous turnover in all kinds of silk stuffs. The women folk of India—by tradition debarred from Western garb—make up for the lack of fashion by the value and rarity, as evinced by texture, colour and embroidery, of the sari lengths.

Woollens have a fair sale, but the demand is for the thinner varieties, except in the case of mufflers and knitted caps. The Hindu, in cold weather, has an inexplicable passion for coarsely-knitted magenta comforters. I never discovered whence they came, but so surely as the temperature drops below a certain degree, so surely there will be a show of magenta comforters and caps with ear lappets. This remark applies principally to Northern India; in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay the temperature so rarely does drop beyond the temperate degree that it is not worth mentioning. The market for electrical supplies, and machinery, mill, tea, printing, mining and railway machinery, also cement and building materials, is a rapidly increasing one; but as it

is mostly in the hands of certain definite import houses, with agents on this side, it may be regarded as a more or less specialised field.

The sale of motor-cars, motor-cycles, and cycles is also considerable. There was a time, only a few years ago, when the more wealthy inhabitants bought lavishly—both as regards numbers and prices. The American invasion has, however, checked the tendency, and the market is now for a car with ground clearance, ample cooling capacity, and at a price not exceeding Rs. 4,500 to Rs. 6,000 (£300 to £400), landed in India.

The cycle trade is one mostly appertaining to the bazaar, and the demand is for a cheap machine of good appearance, the reason being that the principal business is done on hire purchase lines. A native will pay, often, three instalments punctually and then forfeit the machine. If it is an expensive model, the merchant's sale of it second-hand is made at a loss. If, on the other hand, it is of a very cheap grade, the first couple of instalments will have recouped the vendor as regards the initial cost, and anything obtained for it second-hand will be profit.

Amongst odds and ends which find great attraction in the eyes of the masses are cheap cotton umbrellas—black, white, and green—mouth-organs, buttons, watches, lustres, fairy lamps, cheap statuary, and the least expensive grades of imported Virginia cigarettes.

The Native State business is a lucrative one, but has deteriorated greatly during the past

few years. It is one, moreover, which is handled almost entirely by representatives of European houses, or large Bombay and Calcutta firms, in India. At one time, in Hyderabad (Deccan), Jaipur, Bhopal, Mysore, Bikanir, Baroda, Rewah, and other large states, an assemblage of ten or a dozen "box wallahs"—representating all manner of commodities, from giant emeralds to musical boxes, inlaid furniture to ozonators—would be found at the dâk bungalow or state rest house. Those happy halcyon days of good comradeship and weird experiences are, alas, however, gone. The last big deal was when the old Nizam of Hyderabad purchased thirteen elaborate six-cylinder British cars in half that number of minutes. Nowadays, the Rajah Sahib writes to England for catalogues and demands an export discount, or places his orders for linen, furniture, lift machinery, pictures, etc., with an indent house in Calcutta or Bombay. But, while the old régime lasted, romance was spelt with a capital "R," and not the least intriguing part of the business was obtaining payment and counting the rupees—probably dug up and black with age, from some obscure spot in the palace precincts, where they had been buried for years past.

The collection of the money was usually much more difficult than the obtaining of the orders. There is a story that one box wallah, smarting under numerous and long-continued evasions, vowed that he just would *not* be put off any longer. His boast came to the ears of the native prince

—rather a fine old sport in his way—who invited him up to play a friendly game of chess, the understanding being that it was merely a preliminary to settlement of the debt in full.

They played chess for forty-eight hours on end, when the box wallah—blind, tired, famished, and in the last stages of collapse—staggered away to the dâk bungalow, too weary even to think of the money for which he had come, and only anxious to get away before another game was suggested. A couple of hours afterwards the cash was sent to the bungalow under charge of an escort, who also bore largesse to the tune of 100 gold mohurs in payment of the box wallah's trouble.

The only unfortunate and disconcerting—occasionally—thing was that once you entered certain native states, you had to obtain the ruler's sanction to leave again. There was one such principality in the United Provinces where one poor box wallah landed full of hope, and determined to sell or die in the attempt. His time was carefully parcelled out, and he had allowed himself exactly one week—deeming this three days more than was likely to be required. He was, it may be mentioned, a box wallah with a persuasive tongue which, until he arrived at the particular state in mention, had never failed to be a golden tongue. He sent his card to the palace and waited.

Ten days afterwards he was still waiting.

Eventually, as no summons arrived for him

to show his wares, he made enquiry from the Minister's Babu secretary—a voluble and affable person who had once failed for the Calcutta University matric.

"God, He knows!" responded the latter, in answer to the query as to the possibility of the Rajah Sahib seeing the box wallah at an early date. "At present he sleeps."

"But," quoth the commercial, "he can't have been sleeping for the last ten days."

"Why not?" replied the Babu. "Ten days—fourteen days—a month—all the same to the Rajah Sahib. My master very peculiar man. Does everything thoroughly. Eat a month—drink a month—stay a month in Zenana—sleep a month—talk a month. My master *very* curious man."

"Then, perhaps I'd better go and come back later," suggested the box wallah hopefully.

"Sorry; no can go without Maharajah Sahib give hookum," returned the Babu. "You go—he wake—swear like hell for a month after. No, no—you wait see."

And the disconsolate box wallah had to.

Burmah and Siam.

The Burman has been called the Irishman of the East. He takes life easily, and, like the Malay, much prefers to sleep or contemplate the glamorous colour scheme with which nature and his female relatives have endowed his land to anything in the matter of work. The Burmese male

is the " knut " of the East—at least, he and the Siamese share the honours between them—and his taste in headgear is almost as eclectic as that of his English namesake's is, or was, in socks and ties.

A viridian green or pale, rose-pink strip of silk adorns his well-oiled locks, and his loonghi, more often than not of " tartan " design, is a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. With such æsthetic tastes in the matter of dress he can scarcely be expected to expend his energies in labour. It would be asking too much. He has the Irishman's volubility and good temper, and the Irishman's proverbial quickness with the equivalent of the shillelagh—the wicked little " dah," which is a cross between the Malay " kris " and the Gurkha " kukhrie," notwithstanding that the British have most unkindly reduced considerably his escapades in the " dacoity " line.

Realising his deficiencies—though, no doubt, being equally proud of his picturesqueness and good humour—Mah Meh Mie, his wife, has plumped for female suffrage (albeit without any display of militancy), and taken the management of affairs into her own plump, capable little hands. And as, added to shrewdness, fair dealing, a pretty face, good figure and attractive coiffure, she possesses an ultra-Parisian capacity for putting on her garb of wonderfully-textured silks—shot pearl and opal, autumn brown and gold, amber and rose, or a full, " windy sky " green, sunset flame and Capri sea-turquoise—so that it is, for the time

being, an actual part of her, it is not to be wondered at that she succeeds in administering the business very well indeed.

The life of the bazaar box wallah is wont to assume a roseate hue in Burmah. All negotiations, generally speaking, are carried out by the aforesaid Mah Meh Mie or her daughters, and the only flaw in his life is that the human breast has only a limited elasticity, and that life is so short and the pretty Burmese women so many.

If the commerce with Burmah depended upon the people of that country only, there would not be much doing. The silk with which her inhabitants clothe themselves is mostly made in the country—at all events, the best; fish is plentiful; and rice and tobacco, though cultivation is needed, are easily procured. And when a special " festa " is desired, there is the " durrian " season—the fruit which has a taste as paradisical as its smell is antithetical.

As the Burman will not labour himself, if he can help it, and his wife is too busy looking after her lord and master and the business, and as somebody must work, the importation of the Indian coolie has been the only method of solving the problem. And wherever the Indian coolie is, there will be found also a market for piece goods, empty kerosine tins, galvanised iron, cheap mirrors and the numerous other articles enumerated in the preceding portion of this chapter. In addition, the Chinese have made considerable migration

into Burmah—in fact, quite a large portion of the business is in their hands.

The requirements, then, of Burmah, in the bulk, are very similar to those appertaining to India proper, with the exception that machinery, save rice machinery, and building materials, are not so much in demand.

The Burman has almost the same penchant for dosing himself with patent medicines as has the Hindu, but, judging from his psychology, I should say that sedatives and lung tonics of a pleasantly warming nature, are more to his fancy than tonics and nerve restorers.

There is a large business to be done in cheap crockery and enamelware, the latter of the grade known as seconds, and a certain call for essences and perfumes. Bicycles are also popular.

The Siamese trade is on very much the same lines, though Siam is more commercially inclined than Burmah. The trade in perfumes, mostly synthetic and heavy, is considerable, and, before the war, was mostly catered for by the Germans. Scents of the musk, tuberose and attar varieties are most popular. Good prices are obtainable for the right kinds, and the native princes are large buyers. An affable Continental "gent" encountered on his way thither had at least half a dozen large cases of samples of perfumes (and soaps), the prices of some of which were as high as £12 the ounce, and they were practically all synthetic products, but so excellent that they

might have been centuple-distilled essences of the actual flowers.

A series of similar perfumes—"Dralle's Illusion"—was on sale in Great Britain before the war, and is a good specimen of the type of thing required amongst the more wealthy Eastern natives generally. In the cheaper lines particularly, an attractive "bottle" goes a long way in obtaining sales.

Owing to the best passenger service to Bangkok being, before the war, by a German line, they had obtained a large hold upon the trade.

There is, however, excellent scope for considerable extension, particularly in goods such as brassware, china and earthenware, enamelware, clocks and watches, electrical goods, glassware, hardware, jewellery and plate, wool piece goods, in all of which German and Austrian firms had obtained the lead.

It would pay manufacturers of such articles to send out representatives, as, although a certain amount of business can be obtained through export merchants in London and Manchester, far better advantage can be taken of the openings when first-hand knowledge has been obtained on the spot. Germany carried out a policy analogous to her submarine one, commercially, ere ever the war started, and the only way to combat with it is to make play with *our* commercial parallel for destroyers and patrol boats.

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open branches, *but* the buyers should be put en rapport with the sellers—and a personal visit every two or three years is the only way of compassing this, and, in some circumstances, a yearly trip is advisable.

I am not, unfortunately, in a position to speak regarding Indo-China (the French colonies), but possibly the proposed Allies' commercial alliance will lead to the further exploiting of this market. Only in the spring of 1914 did I meet with a party of young German students who had trekked from Canton to Bangkok through the jungles and hills of Indo-China. Why and wherefore the trip had been made they would not say, but there is little doubt that they had returned with an excellent grasp of the possibilities, commercial and otherwise, of that region.

The Straits Settlements.

To Sir Stamford Raffles and Captain Francis Light Great Britain really owes the acquisition of what is now, probably, one of the finest tin and rubber districts in the East. The Portuguese founded the first settlements on the peninsula, the Dutch followed them, and, finally, the British, principally by negotiation, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The most ancient inhabitants are the Sakei, but they are now only to be found in the back jungles; the Malays came over from Sumatra some five hundred years ago, and now the Chinese have made the F.M.S. a second home.

Economically they were necessary, because the Malay, like the Burman, is not in love with work; but eventually, unless the Malthusian doctrine finds more favour than heretofore and immigration is strictly limited, it will come about that they will be the possessors, in all but name, from the borders of Siam to those of the native state of Johore and possibly a little over.

During the past three or four years the F.M.S. have been suffering from a slight depression consequent upon the rubber boom which preceded it. The symptoms are really akin to those experienced the morning after a night out. While the boom lasted, money was no object—it just "was." Unfortunately, this idyllic state of affairs could not last, and retrenchment became necessary, if the future were to hold any hope. Champagne and motor-cars were about the first items to be cut out. The estate owners felt that life was simply one "demned" thing after another. Tin, too, was down and living was up.

Not that people were really badly off, but the after-effects of the previous "burst" led to moralising. Still, matters are looking up again, and possibly, after the war—a war in which alloys and rubber have formed such important factors in the provision of munitions and transport—they will be ready monetarily for another boom period.

As in the case of Siam, the import trade is mostly in the hands, either of houses with agents over here or branches of British houses over there,

the first named being the most general. And, therefore, again the best suggestion that can be made to increase business is that of the personal visit—first to get en rapport with the buyers, and secondly, to become au fait with the requirements.

A large business has been done, and there is every chance of a still greater one being accomplished in the future.

The Chinese, though of frugal mind in most matters, are good buyers—they share many tastes in common with the European. Unlike the Hindu, Burman and Malay, the Chinese race is about the only one in the East which appreciates a good dinner. True, some of the edibles negotiated are strange and gruesome, but others, in the form of duckling and sucking pig, carry a wide appeal. Every fifth Chinaman, not engaged in work, would seem to be carrying home for consumption a flattened and brown-glazed cooked duck, or portion thereof, to satisfy his inner needs. He has also a strange fondness for gold filling in his teeth. One is apt to surmise that it is his method of banking his savings. His principal requirements would appear to be—where the inner man is not concerned—blankets, earthenware, crockery (a large amount of the cheaper qualities of this is imported from China), enamelware, cotton drills and singlets, hardware, accordions and drugs. Those of the Malay run to sarongs (cotton lengths), and a general indent similar to that of Siam and Burmah.

For some occult reason, however, the Malay prefers dark colours, or white, for his sarongs.

Germany and Austria, although they had not entirely driven out British goods of the aforementioned lines, had made very serious inroads upon our trade. Possibly, during the past eighteen months, the matter has more or less righted itself, but it is up to us to see that the " clutching hand " (which might be the trade description analogous to the military " mailed fist ") does not again obtain too strong a grip. The desiderata most necessary are cheapness, attractiveness in packing, and " eye appeal." Just exactly what constitutes the latter is a matter for the study of individual manufacturers. And there is where the personal visit is so advantageous. There is a distych that holds that " you can't " judge cigars by the picture on the box. It may be true where the cultivated palate and selective mentality are concerned, but the average Eastern buyer would judge the goods offered almost entirely by the wrapping—not once, but every time.

Extensions of the railway system are planned and being carried out as quickly as the clearance of the jungles will permit. Eventually, a line will join Bangkok with Singapore. New mines, rubber estates, and possibly factories of other kinds will follow, so that there is every prospect of business with the F.M.S. doubling in the not very distant future.

The Dutch East Indies

Java, Sumatra, Borneo and Macassar in Celebes —the name of the latter calling up soothing ideas

of spicy breezes, dreamy days and a lotus-eating existence—are Dutch (with the exception of British North Borneo), and the trade is, to a very great extent, in the hands of their colonisers.

As a matter of fact, Java offers the finest market of the group, and incidentally, save for a little Dutch hotel in Singapore, the most soul-satisfying and cool lager beer out East.

The Javanese and the people of Sumatra are not an easy race to deal with—the very appearance of their sarongs would hint as much.

Where the Malay of the F.M.S. affects dull reds, the Burman sunset tints, and the Hindu " raw forceful colour," the Javanese swathe their bodies in cottons printed in mixed tiger yellow and sienna, the pattern resembling the markings on the back of a turtle, or, more nearly, those of the kareit and puff-adder—two of the most poisonous snakes to be found in the East. The printing is done by hand by means of wood blocks. Favourite markings also are those after the design of the " roses " on a leopard's coat or the brain-palsying devices shown in a futurist drawing.

The roads in Java are excellent, and the importation of motor-cars has been considerable. In Sumatra, however, they are comparatively few and far between.

The cars must be of strong—very strong—design, because the Dutchman in Java starts to put on weight five minutes after he has landed, and keeps up the process until the day he leaves. Until eighteen months ago, Continental cars were

most in favour, but new conditions may render the country a better market for British products.

The Dutch are such good business men—they live next door to the Germans—that I doubt if their East Indian market would pay for any considerable attempt on our part to cultivate it, at all events in the same manner as with other parts of the East.

One of the principal difficulties with which the box wallah and he who goes to the Dutch East Indies on business has to contend is that of finding Mynheer at office. There were a number of heads of houses at the hotel where I was staying, and, so far as ocular evidence could witness, their days were made up principally as follows :—

At 6 a.m. they appeared on the verandah of their rooms, spread themselves out in long chairs in déshabille, and drank tea—or lager.

They sat there until 9 a.m., when they breakfasted—also in déshabille.

From ten until one they were not visible, so I presumed they were on business bent, though it was difficult to discover their whereabouts.

At one o'clock they appeared again, for " rice table," a repast of curry and rice, at which some dozen or so Malay waiters carried out strange rites in the serving up of relays of odds and ends, which were piled upon and around the central helping of rice until the plate resembled a volcano in full eruption. This dish was followed by beefsteaks, sweets and other comestibles, flanked by much " Fass " (lager) beer.

After lunch they returned to their rooms, and had a siesta until five, when they reappeared, again in déshabille, upon the verandah to partake of tea or more beer, and enjoy the view afforded by the aforementioned long chairs.

At 7 p.m. they dressed for the day and promenaded the principal thoroughfares until 9 p.m., when they dined. In the evening they got through still more " Fass " beer.

The amount of time put in en negligée was little short of marvellous, considering the fascination that plump bare feet possess for the particularly virulent brand of mosquito which Java produces.

The ladies do not appear to dress at all—with the exception of donning an airy dressing gown —until 7 p.m.

Yet they thrive, both male and female of their kind, and retain the rosy pinkness of cheek and blueness of eye, the while they wax fat and monosyllabic. They are the one nation which appears to have solved satisfactorily the problem of making themselves thoroughly comfortable in the Eastern Tropics.

China.

A writer—H. Norman—once stated that the Chinaman and the mosquito are the two great mysteries of creation.

Both, at all events, have an extraordinary amount of perseverance and an inscrutability which, though it cannot be said to possess charm,

has the merit of lending interest to its proceedings. Owing to this inscrutability, in part, and in measure to extreme conservatism, business intercourse with China has, until quite recent years, been a matter of great difficulty. Anything modern and foreign was viewed with considerable suspicion, and, from 1860 until 1904, there were only thirty-eight treaty ports, or foreign trade centres, where commerce with the outside world was permitted on any scale.

Macao—now a colony—has been in the nominal possession of the Portuguese for three hundred years, but, with that exception, the first treaty was only signed at Nanking in 1842, by which Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Shanghai were declared free. Since the various railway systems have been opened, matters have improved by leaps and bounds, but the area open to Western commerce is still very limited compared with the country's possibilities. The absence of roads—though the waterways make up for them in part —has also militated against trade expansion, as has, undoubtedly, the difficulty of the Chinese language—or languages—and the fact that the dialects are so varied that they are often unintelligible to the inhabitants themselves where conversation between natives of two different provinces is concerned.

Of late, the main fever in China, on the part of the Powers (or monarchs of finance) has been to obtain more and still more concessions for the building of railways, opening up of trading facilities,

etc. The Hôtel des Wagons-Lits in Peking, just before the war, was as cosmopolitan as Paris or New York. Every second individual encountered there was after (or reputed to be after) concessions of one kind or another. And each man wore as secretive, conspiratorial a mien—patently disguised under a cloak of open nonchalance—as was ever manifested by the plotters in Gilbert's comic opera, *The Grand Duke.*

The pose was so very absurd on the face of it. Nobody could possibly venture to stay for more than a couple of days, or at outside a week, for pleasure in the city. For a more pestilential spot it would be difficult to find, notwithstanding the various embassies in Legation Street.

(At present the situation in that august thoroughfare, where the "territories" of Japan, America, Great Britain, and the Central and other Powers are all within a good stone's throw of one another, must be interesting, to say the least.)

To the unprejudiced eye of the onlooker, China would appear to be in the position of a huge prehistoric animal, too slow-moving, large and unwieldy to defend itself (unless one of its aggressors happened to be close enough to get rolled upon when it stretched), and against which is pitted a number of hunters, each desirous of obtaining some portion of its anatomy as a trophy.

It has recently been mooted in one or two quarters that Great Britain is taking rather a mean advantage in endeavouring to capture

German markets whilst that country is busy with the war and unable, on account of our fleet, to look after those it had so laboriously gained. Without going into the ethics of the question, it may be stated that, as in all life, there is a *quid pro quo,* so we are only doing, openly, that which the Central Powers have been occupied in, secretively, for many years past. Certainly, to give them their due, they have accomplished more in opening up Chinese commerce in some lines than most; they have grappled with enormous difficulties, and have succeeded in creating markets far in the interior which we might have sought, phlegmatically, to obtain, without success, for years to come.

In machinery and engineering supplies particularly, the German system of regarding initial contracts as purely a matter of advertisement has enabled them to obtain indents in competition with all other countries.

The British business in piece goods appeared secure, but even there, Germany had got behind our sentries. The Japanese, too, are gaining ground every day, and British residents in China deplore the arrangements by which Japan was deputed to act as policeman for us, instead of our keeping a squadron in Chinese waters.

In one or two lines, indeed, British manufacturers have done wonders—for example may be cited soap and cigarettes. Representatives of a combine dealing in the latter commodity and handling the very cheapest brands, have penetrated,

by country cart and caravan, far into the interior, with the result that certain brands of cigarettes are a household word far away in the wilds. The men who have made these expeditions should be worth their weight in coined silver by firms desirous of opening up connections.

The Chinee is a man of simple tastes, most of which he is able to gratify with home products. But, as with all people of simple tastes who own them because they are the only ones they can indulge, he is mighty quick to form new desires if approached in the right way. The nation as a whole remains as conservative as ever, but the individual is peculiarly adaptable. Hence, continued advertising in a manner that will appeal to him (as, for example, the electric sky sign, and posters such as the wall-painting I saw in Shanghai showing the chubby fat infant and the thin anæmic one in connection with a special brand of condensed milk, where the children were pictured with Chinese top-knots and features); personal rapport, bred of constant visiting by travellers, and cheap articles, attractively presented or done up, produce inevitably a profitable effect. When events move a little and roads are less of a rarity, there should be a good opening for motor-cars. At present, except in and around the principal cities, anything even approaching a beaten track wide enough for carriages is practically unknown. Although the distance between Tientsin and Peking, the capital, is under one hundred miles, there is no road communicating. The only

tracks available, therefore, are those used by the country carts and quite impassable, except on rare occasions, to the automobile.

The wheelbarrow is still the most favoured means of locomotion, and the paths used by these are none too good, as well as being too narrow for the negotiation even of a fair-sized perambulator.

Nevertheless, a fair number of cars is met with in Shanghai, Peking, Tientsin, and one or two in Hankow and several of the other treaty ports. There are signs, however, of better days in this direction, and the mandarins, officials and rich merchants, when they once succumb to the fascinations of motoring, will, I believe, soon see that roads are forthcoming.

Although the bazaars in the native cities are, of course, the principal vehicles of trade, the Nanking Road, in the European quarter of Shanghai, is probably one of the most effective viewpoints from which a fairly comprehensive bird's-eye survey can be obtained of the requirements of modern purchasing China, being, as it is, one of the most popular shopping centres for the better class native. Were it not for the strange black and gilt and red and gilt signs, one might almost be on Broadway, so bizarre are the lighting effects, so thick the traffic at 7 o'clock of an evening. And whilst many of the stores deal in purely native products — slippers, silks, hats, writing brushes, ink and thin rice paper, etc.—there are others in plenty which expose electrical goods and sundries, glassware, clocks and watches, plate,

jewellery, European hats, " reach-me-down " suits, and hosiery of Western origin.

The Nanking Road, however, is practically the only thoroughfare of its kind in China proper, as, abutting on the Bund, it has taken on a European tone, so far as the shop fronts, sanitation, and so forth are concerned. The native city " bazaar " is very different. There is found China in the raw—probably Canton shows it at its most intimidating. The streets, or alleys, in the latter city are so many and narrow, the houses on either side so dark and beetling, and the press of crude humanity so overpowering, to say nothing of the odour which permeates the whole. Nevertheless, the place vibrates with business—the traffic both in Eastern and Western wares being enormous.

A knowledge of the dialect peculiar to the district in which openings are desired, even when it is only a modest knowledge, is desirable and of great benefit to the representative or agent, but it is not absolutely essential. English is widely spoken in the treaty ports and Pidgin (*i.e.*, business) English will, as a rule, procure a mutual understanding, besides being fairly easy to obtain. It has also the advantage of being intelligible, with the exception of perhaps a few words, in all the treaty ports. In fact, natives of two different provinces occasionally fall back on it when their lack of knowledge of each other's dialect prevents intercourse. Pidgin French and Pidgin German are not so catholic, though in

Tientsin, and of course Kaiu Chau, some very edifying specimens are to be heard. (The head clerk at an hotel in Tientsin has an excellent command of all three, which he uses with great effect when at a loss for epithets to bestow upon some recalcitrant coolie.)

An excellent vocabulary of Pidgin English is obtainable in a small book entitled " Pidgin English Sing Song," by Charles G. Leland, and there are several pocket vocabularies and phrase-books procurable.

At the same time, where China is concerned, the box wallah can, at best, obtain only a transitory influence. The only satisfactory method of obtaining a share in the trade which the land of the yellow gown will have to offer later on—that is, if the new Russo-Japanese agreement does not turn out to be merely an astute ruse to carve the country up between the two Powers—is to set up business in one of the treaty ports.

A good compradore will not be very difficult to find, but the prospective adventurer, if he wishes to be successful, *must*, as a first step, obtain a fair fluency in the dialect of the province in which he intends opening out.

I propose dealing with the question of languages, in relation to foreign trade, in a later chapter, but, in the meantime, I would urge that too much importance cannot be placed upon the necessity of removing the stigma which has, for many years past, caused foreigners to look upon us as an unenterprising and slothful race—

the stigma of being unable to master any other tongue than our own.

It is stated that numerous interned Germans have taken up the study of Chinese with a view to relieving the tedium of their incarceration and also with an eye to the future. In its spoken form it presents difficulties, no doubt—difficulties which resolve themselves principally into the tedium of learning a large number of words and phrases by heart. In its written form, however, there can be no lack of interest, and he who has mastered the drawing of the characters, even moderately well, will, at least, have obtained a feeling for the artistic, and a new and enthralling sense of the power of line drawing and this is to say nothing of the interest which lies in the tracing of the single ideas which, combined severally, go to form new concepts and meanings.

For example, the word for child is represented by the modern character 子 in which it is still possible to trace the 子 ideograph or picture of the head, arms and legs in profile.

A boy and a girl together 好 represent the idea "good," *i.e.*, it is not 好 good for man to be alone.

The symbols for the sun and moon, when placed together side by side, represent a new symbol for "brightness," or the sun 日 when drawn above a line, indicates the 旦 meaning "morning."

The several foregoing examples will, I feel sure, manifest that, whatever else the study of

Chinese characters may be, it can in no wise be considered lacking in interest.

The good deportment and politeness of the Chinese is proverbial and, to tell the truth, most restful in these degenerate days of rush and flurry. His code of honour, commercially, is good, though less irreproachable than it was a few years ago. He is, however, even less to be hurried than the Hindu, and a deal of any importance at all is a matter, not of hours, but days. Usually he is good-humoured and kindly, but there is some strange twist in his nature whereby, when he *does* show his teeth, his "frightfulness" is of the most cold-blooded and horrible description. If, in a tight corner, you can raise a laugh from him, or at him, there is generally a chance of matters simmering down. A photo I saw of a bust taken during the looting of the palace at Peking during the China war typified the two-sided nature of the race in cold stone better than could any words. The sculptor was not known, but that he was a master was evident without any questioning. The head, at first glance—it was tilted a little backwards, the mouth forming a silent laugh—seemed to embody the very soul of mirth. But a nearer inspection showed that the humour with which the whole "poise" was endowed arose out of the fact that somebody who had offended the subject was undergoing the death of a hundred cuts—more than probably through information laid against him by the one who was so horribly amused.

To sum up, the trade with China is not one of which rapid and unprecedented progress can be anticipated. The country is agricultural in the main, and, as is general with agricultural countries, the demand lies in small articles and necessaries. At the same time, it is a market well worth cultivating.

Amongst articles not already enumerated (in which, however, Japan has made considerable strides in obtaining business on account of cheapness of production and proximity offering low sea freight) are knitted goods, cotton umbrellas and hats. In the matter of odds and ends, buttons, brushes, enamelware, looking-glasses, and an *olla podrida* of cheap fancy goods, will find a ready sale if possessed of sufficient "eye-appeal" and cheapness.

Japan

In the generality of countries the Englishman visits, he manages, by instinct partly and partly through it being given to him as his birthright, to get the most comfortable room in the hotel. He then planks his belongings down, and by the time he has unpacked his trunk he is thoroughly at home.

That is one of the reasons why he is so often disliked by other voyagers. He takes for granted as his right, what the average American or other traveller cannot obtain even though he offer to pay double rates for it. Without unnecessary fuss or bluster, he procures just such things as

he requires, and goes his own sweet way without caring a snap of the fingers for public opinion, the conventions or anything else.

The American, on the other hand, though he believes he belongs to the first country on earth, is a slave to convention. His very restaurants and hotels are more hedged round with restrictions than any others in the world. They are also, as a rule, the most uncomfortable. I once dropped asleep in the lounge of an hotel in Detroit and was nearly arrested by the house detective as an immoral person in consequence.

In Japan, however, except in Tokyo and Yokohama, even the Englishman is cowed—not through anything in the nature of fear, be it understood, but simply because the wind is taken out of his sails by the hotel management treating him as one would treat an invited, as opposed to a paying, guest. Sandals are placed by his bedside; a dressing kimono hangs in the wardrobe, in case he has forgotten or not brought his own. The servants would give him his bath even, if he would let them. And these things, small in themselves but damnably subtle, give the keynote to the country. You may go there, do business there, admire the views, and even take up your abode there. But you must never, never forget you are an intruder (welcome, temporarily, perhaps), and that you can never lay claim to any *real* holding in the land.

The American globe-trotter, not being thin skinned, does not notice it; he only thinks that

Japan is " bully " for comfort and " rather cute." But the Englishman knows, and that is why the Japanese, apart from his inability to play the game in the matter of respecting other countries' trade marks, is not popular in business circles.

Not being content, unfortunately, with having attained the position of the most artistic people in the world (though Chinese art is preferred by some), the Japanese have become imbued with the desire to become one of the most successful in commerce. The two do not go together; nevertheless, they have approached the problem in exactly the same manner as, in the past, they obtained the ability, by studying nature, to put life into a piece of ivory, suspended animation into a bunch of flowers or a couple of storks painted on a screen, and tense animal passion into a bronze tiger peering through a wind-clearing in a clump of grass.

The result is that the externals are perfect—to look upon—but the mind back of them has not grasped the fundamental of all trade, which is (or should be) mutual benefit and the living up to promises or samples.

Whilst it suited them (and it suits them still, to a certain extent), they bought from us and from our neighbours, but with one idea only—to copy and study the products so that eventually they could produce them themselves.

The tariff on a great number of articles already is high, and, before very long, it will be made exorbitant, and the people will, with their new

constitution, waterworks, sanitary boards, electric trolley systems, factories, shipyards and what not, either succumb—owing to their skulls not being sufficiently elastic to allow for further expansion—or be a source of considerable annoyance to a number of countries whose shores are washed by the Pacific. The general impression seems to favour the latter contingency. The Japanese have fine national traits, but—they have one great fault :—a superfluity of Ego in their cosmos. Germany suffered from the same complaint. It is to be hoped that Japan may realise in time in what straits a nation may be plunged by over-indulgence in the imperative mood. In the meantime, they are importing—or were two years ago—a strange line in children's straw hats trimmed with artificial flowers such as would scorn to appear even akin to nature, ready-made " reach-me-downs," machinery parts, railway materials, turbines, and all of the *outward* signs without any of the *inward* spiritual grace of the West.

The children—the one totally, as yet, unspoiled object of the country—are heinously compelled to wear those straw hats on high days and holidays. The reach-me-downs take the place of the graceful kimono, in which the Japanese, at all events, looked a gentleman. And the turbines and electric trolleys, acting in conjunction, whirl voyagers along to the one-time beauty spots whose chiefest charm was the clambering up of hills, with straw sandals over your shoes, or on the backs of mountain ponies, to reach them.

Truly, if Providence were really merciful, she would banish all iron and steel from off the face of the globe—or, at any rate, from Japan.

From the above, pessimistic as it may be, it will readily be seen that there is not much to be gained by endeavouring to seek export trade in a country which only uses a consignment of side drums, shall we say, to analyse them and locate the spot, for future reference, from which the sound comes. To sum up, you may reduce matters to the lowest common factor of a business preliminary—where a good many box wallahs are concerned—which manifests itself in the phrase, "What's yours." In India, if you are thirsty, you call for a "peg" (whisky and soda). In Malaya you call for a stinger, which procures the same material result.

But in Japan you demand—at least, the correct procedure, if you are wise, is to frame your request so—a whisky and soda, and add: "*and let me see the bottle.*"

Siberia

Siberia is *some* country, as the American traveller remarked after eight days in the train which crosses it. It has one great disadvantage from the point of view of the British trader, and that is it can be fed from both sides and, of the two, more conveniently from the port of Vladivostock —at least, so far as Eastern Siberia is concerned.

The resources and possibilities of both Eastern and Western Siberia are enormous. The country,

on the whole, is more equable than Canada, and the soil, also, taking it in the bulk, is excellent. There are at least two British incorporated companies making a speciality of the Siberian trade, but there is room, and more than room, for others.

The best way, and, in fact, the only way, of dealing with the business satisfactorily is by having a supply of goods on the spot, and a branch or separate house in the large centres, such as Vladivostock, Irkutsk, etc., in Eastern, and Omsk, Tomsk, Tobolsk, etc., in Western Siberia.

The demand is principally for agricultural, milling, pumping, electrical and motor machinery and appurtenances, cast-iron ware, enamel ware, hardware and cutlery, sewing machines, chemicals, stoves, heating apparatus, and household goods on the American lines. Boots and shoes and general stores also afford a fair sale, and, in fact, all the essentials that go to the opening up of a new country or colony, save such as can be produced locally.

The business methods in Eastern Siberia appertain more to our own standard than to those peculiar to Russia, but manufacturers who wish to "get in" have really very little chance unless they send representatives over to study the requirements and conditions first hand, as they are applied to their particular line.

Unfortunately, long credits are the rule rather than the exception, particularly where agricultural and other machinery is concerned. America and Germany have supplied a great portion of the trade,

and, in textiles, Japan is making a bid, now that the Russian mills, owing to the war, are finding it difficult to keep up supplies.

In Western Siberia, the trade is more in the hands of Russian merchants, and Russian conditions of doing business are consequently more prevalent.

Farm requirements, ploughs, flour milling and pumping machinery are wanted, but the only really satisfactory method would be by opening up in, say, Petrograd or Moscow—as suggested in the chapter dealing with Russia—and from that centre controlling the local branches.

A representative of a large firm of contractors who had travelled on a prospecting trip through Siberia was most enthusiastic regarding the country and its possibilities, from a settler's point of view. The population numbers many of the better class political "outlaws" from Russia, and they, in addition to bringing with them that love of progressiveness which formed their undoing originally, possess some of the brightest brains in the whole of the Empire. Few there are who would willingly go back now, and in time to come it will not be surprising if the regeneration for which Russia hopes does not receive its principal stimulant from these settlers.

CHAPTER VIII

Countries and Requirements—(*continued*)

Australia and Africa

Australia

AT first sight it may be deemed somewhat unwarrantable to lump together two such large areas of land as Australia and Africa. But if a little consideration be given to the matter, it will be apparent that, so far as the more civilised territories thereof are concerned, the characteristics relating to commerce are not so very dissimilar: that is to say, the portions comprised, in Australia, by Western and Southern Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and, to some extent, Queensland; and, in South Africa, by Cape Colony, the Transvaal and Rhodesia.

Both countries, in regard to the territories mentioned, have attained to a state of development of a high order, the climates of both are fairly temperate, and the inhabitants, modern, at all events, are our compatriots.

With a not very large number of exceptions, therefore, the requirements of these areas are similar to our own, and can be summed up in the one phrase—general cargo. Bricks and hatpins,

machinery and cloths, boots and shoes, cameras and literature, glassware and hardware, chemicals and paints, and, in fact, manufactured articles of every shape, size, material and substance, are in constant demand and, taking the general bulk, have been and are supplied by Great Britain.

The question of keeping this commerce and still further increasing it is, then, a question of the methods to be followed rather than that of goods to be supplied, of manner of selling as opposed to specifications of articles sold, though certain modifications are required also.

There is comparatively little difference between Sydney, New South Wales, and Brighton, Sussex, so far as customs and the prevailing characteristics go; nevertheless, there is considerably more independence of spirit in the former city, and, with it, a corresponding degree of chafing at the unwillingness, in a number of instances, of British manufacturers to amend their products to suit the popular taste.

It is not so much that the essentials need changing; it is that, outside of the cities, the country is still in its babyhood, and certain articles require to be made more strongly and perhaps more roughly finished than corresponding articles intended for home sales. American motors and agricultural machinery are two items which could be given as an illustration. These, as was pointed out in a previous chapter, have not scored because they were modified to suit

Australian and South African requirements, but because the local rural conditions in America more nearly approximate to the rural conditions of the former, both being comparatively new countries. Thus, whilst the majority of people would infinitely prefer an English car to a Ford or Studebaker, yet the latter offer, in addition to cheaper first cost, the increased ground clearance that the country demands, and high engine-power compared to dead weight. Again, though the American agricultural machinery will possibly not last so long as the British product, the initial cost is less, and the design is adapted better to a country where large, as compared with medium acreage, is found. At the end of a couple of years, the owner can scrap his old machinery and suffer no very great loss, and purchase new stuff embodying the latest improvements. An English machine is too good to scrap; it is still quite serviceable, and the result is that it is either put on one side until it rusts away, or is kept in use, to the owner's disadvantage, because he cannot compete with other men whose machines are fitted with the latest labour-saving devices. Being a democratic country, too, the domestic servant problem is a very difficult one, so that household labour-saving devices, such as the States have given such attention to of late years, are urgently needed. Here, again, the British manufacturer is behind the times. The more democratic a country is the more unpleasant it is to live in often; nevertheless, the better all-round market it offers—

in particular, for moderately-priced articles of household use. A walk round an American department store is an education in this direction, but, failing this, a supply of catalogues dealing with commodities of the foregoing nature, would be a distinct advantage to manufacturers of enamelware, stoves and kitchen utensils.

Japan is at present exerting herself to obtain a greater share of the Australian trade, and as labour is cheap with her, and she is geographically nearer than we, she is likely to prove, in many lines, a formidable rival to us.

Where labour is not cheap, as in Great Britain and America, the only method of reducing the ultimate selling figure to a normal one is by production on a large scale. This problem has, in part, been dealt with in the chapter treating upon the organisation of the factory, but the desirability of coping with it may, advantageously, be again emphasised here.

An article which will retail at a fair price of, say, five shillings or five pounds in England will cost probably ten shillings or seven pounds ten by the time it reaches the retail buyer in the Antipodes. It has to carry at least four more profits or charges—those appertaining to steamship freight, duty, packing and rail freight on the other side, with, perhaps, two middlemen's commissions instead of one, and though wages are higher in Australia than they are here, the difference is rarely worth double when is considered the extra cost of practically all commodities.

Another reason why the British manufacturer will often lose a sale lies in his inability to give immediate deliveries. The fault is partly with the colonial buyer in not summing up his requirements beforehand, and indenting, at an early date, for forward delivery. But the position of the manufacturer is to supply his customer's wants, not to instruct the latter how to run his business. So that here again an advantage would be obtained by producing on a larger scale.

In the case of preliminary enquiries the British tendency to quote f.o.b. English port, instead of c.i.f. port of destination, is also a source of dissatisfaction to the colonial buyer. It is always easier to get information as to freight charges at the port of lading rather than the port of discharge, and this fact should be borne in mind.

It may be taken as an axiom that the easier it is made for a buyer to obtain a given thing the greater chance there is of a sale resulting. If there are two quotations to hand for, intrinsically, the same article, one of which gives the c.i.f. price and the other only f.o.b. charges, the odds are two to one that the first cited will secure the order.

The sum total of the psychology of the colonial is, as a rule, the same as that of a badly-brought-up child. His troubles are the only ones that count. He is far more imperially minded than the average Britisher, and the wine of imperialism has gone to his head.

Heaven forfend that I should attempt to

belittle him in the slightest shape or degree, because a finer fellow, on the whole, never existed.

Only, he has got a big, brand-new country to play with—a mass of clay out of which he intends to model something colossally grand—and it irks him to have it brought home to him that the Britisher, generally, doesn't care a two-pence halfpenny continental about his ideals so long as he can sell his goods.

A sympathetic understanding is of far greater value to a salesman than ability to get home on the talking points of a proposition. The buyer will soon discover the salient details of merit himself—it is part of his business to do so. What he wants in the man from whom he is purchasing is an understanding condolence regarding His difficulties, the competition He has to compete with, and His genius for retailing the manufactures.

And this particular entente cordiale is more needed where colonial buyers are concerned than with all the others put together.

There is none more autocratic than the democrat, when it comes down to brass tacks, and Australia is the most democratic country of the present day. Later on, when a few more nations follow suit, we shall all return to the fig leaf and nut diet by reason of everybody being too democratic to work for anybody else. Then we shall be able to start all over again.

The foregoing observations may seem somewhat laboured, but actually they are only a plain statement of what is necessary where the colonial

trade is desired, as indicated by the psychology of the inhabitants. And it is only by pandering to these whims and notions that we can hope to keep that trade.

With the American manufacturers selling to Australia, it is different. The colonial believes that the American is as he himself is, and therefore he does not mind a little lack of anxiety or "cavalier" treatment in the negotiating of business—from an equal. It manifests the "take it or leave it" democratic spirit. But with us he is more exigeant. Our supposed high and mighty self-satisfaction displeases him. It renders it desirable in his mind to show that, although he is with us more or less, commercially he is certainly not a part of us, inasmuch as he is to be bound by our decrees.

When, of course, as he has proved so gallantly and whole-heartedly, it comes to being part of us, "Imperially," that is another pair of shoes.

Just as, in a large number of cases, the single man (in ancient days) had two mortal enemies in the persons of his landlady and her cat, so has the middleman buyer two implacable foes in the manufacturer and the purchaser.

The purchaser wants to buy at the lowest price and the manufacturer to sell at the highest price possible to obtain. But whereas the manufacturer's position is that of a suppliant, the ultimate purchaser's is just the opposite, and, in consequence, it is the latter who obtains the most preferential treatment.

There are only two ways of reversing the

situation. One is by hitting the ultimate purchaser over the head with an " axe," only leaving off when he has promised to use your wares and no others thereafter, and the second is to jolt his mentality by means of advertisement. And, as a New Zealand lady once proudly explained to me on shipboard, only " brains " count " down-under," the latter process is alone serviceable.

Many manufacturers consider that the agent is the person who should bear the brunt of advertising—not taking into consideration that, by so doing, he would be playing one card for his own hand to two or more for that of the manufacturer.

An advertising allowance is all very well, but it is far, far better for the manufacturer to control the allocation himself. By so doing he is making a direct appeal to the consumers and *creating*, insidiously—but none the less surely—a market independent of agents, sub-agents, and all the tribe of middlemen.

A customer buys a proprietary article or a commodity bearing a special brand or trade mark for one of two reasons. The first is that the agent or retailer has created the desire in his mind, temporarily, for that article or commodity. The second is that the purchaser has contracted an idée fixée, bred of familiarity with the name, that it is what he requires. The idée fixée is the better of the two reasons for all parties—particularly the manufacturer and the ultimate purchaser. It is more likely to lead to permanent content with what is purchased and a constant demand.

In America I saw a play entitled, " It pays to advertise." In it one of the characters remarked, apropos of the " pull " obtained by publicity : " Tell me, why do you always eat hens' eggs. Why don't you eat ducks' eggs. They're every bit as good, nutritious, plentiful, etc. Now, just why have you never given ducks' eggs a fair chance ? "

His friend confessed that he didn't know, except that everybody ate hens' eggs.

" Yes, but why does everybody eat hens' eggs," pursued the searcher after knowledge . . . . " I'll tell you. It's because the hen advertises her products. When she's laid an egg she stands up and talks ' egg.' She lets all the world know that she's produced one, and that it's a mighty fine product too. That's why. It's just publicity, and so long as ducks lay eggs and keep quiet about it and hens get up and cackle, the hen's egg is going to romp home every time."

Advertising may be sordid—it may be an eyesore and an oppression of the flesh, but unless you wish to drift away from the world's ken, as represented by the buying public, you've just *got* to advertise with the rest. The superiority of your sales over other people's will depend upon your capacity for creating individual and appealing copy *and* backing it up with the supply of a good product.

In Russia and Asia the trumps fall to the box wallah almost wholly. But in Australia, and, to a great extent, in South Africa, it pays to advertise.

The personal visit is desirable—from the standpoint of finding out what is required and the type of people with whom you have to deal—but the actual selling is best done by the poster and printed page.

If six people each day ask for "Sunflower Sud Powders" at the Balloomoolloo general store or the "Wanga-wanga" trading station, the proprietor or manager has *got* to have, and is going to get them, if it is humanly possible. But, on the other hand, if nobody asks for them, and he is handling a particularly profitable line of German or Japanese "Sud Powder," he is not *very* likely to trouble himself with indenting for the "Sunflower" brand—offering possibly less profit—out of sheer altruism. It isn't done.

In the case of Australia and New Zealand, therefore, the principal methods are, first, to find out exactly what is needed; secondly, to make it as cheaply as possible; thirdly, to advertise it extensively; and fourthly, to give the agents—who will take it up probably under protest at first—a listed c.i.f. selling price which *includes* a paying commission for them, combined with prompt deliveries, and let them see that a British manufacturer for once in a way means business.

Africa

South Africa

The import trade of South Africa is, as already indicated, very similar to that of Australia, with

the exception that, owing to the percentage of natives (Kaffirs and India immigrants), there is a bigger demand for piece goods and cheap truck than in the former country.

In other directions, "general cargo" gives a clue to the principal requirements. The general quality is cheaper than that of the home trade or of Australia, and it is particularly in this direction that Germany has scored.

From one standpoint the British manufacturer was quite right in having as little as he could do with the production of these cheap lines—in the past—but if he desires to extend his connections in the future, more especially where the ultimate purchaser is a "cullud person," the only method will be by turning out such commodities as the latter desires. As I have already endeavoured to show, although the "Oxford Street" markets are the most satisfactory so far as the "kudos" is concerned, the "Mile End" side of commerce is productive, eventually, of the most "shekels."

It is rumoured that Germany, when the war ends, intends to dispose of the stocks of manufactured goods she has been accumulating at a ten per cent. reduction under cost, just to start business again. She claims, possibly quite correctly, that the loss, ultimately, will be less than if she had to build up her trade, step by step, as before, and that the cost will not be nearly so great as that experienced in a few weeks of warfare.

If this actually occurs, the position would not seem to hold out a very roseate prospect for the

British manufacturer who is counting on "cutting in." There will be many people, no doubt, who will boycott anything coming from the Central Powers, but these will not be represented very largely amongst the proletariat.

As far as the general opinion goes in South Africa, British goods are certainly the most favoured; but similar objections to our methods of doing business, in some lines, rule as those already quoted in connection with Australia, namely, lack of advertising, the dislike to giving c.i.f. figures instead of f.o.b. ones, and the objections raised to making changes or modifications and sending out efficient representatives to make terms and assist the local agents to work up business.

There is quite an excellent market in South Africa for novelties; big business has, I learn, recently been done with "barrel organs" and electric pianos, of all things in the world, though these, perhaps, would scarcely be classed as novelties.

The psychology of the South African is not quite so obtrusive as that of the Australian, so that, on the whole, he is more open to reason and argument. Nevertheless, he knows what he wants, and will have it where possible. South Africa, as well as Australia, is rapidly becoming a self-supporting country, and as its capacity for supplying the population with home-made articles increases, it is only reasonable to expect that the import tariffs on those lines will be elevated.

The age of an economical—as governed by the

natural resources of a country—specialisation of commerce is, from all the signs and portents visible, rapidly approaching, if an international trade at a reasonable profit is to be carried on in the future. Unless the question *does* receive attention from this standpoint, the time will come when local competition will make the sale of many manufactured articles exported, upon whose original cost has to be added freights, handling charges and duty, an impossibility. A consummation such as this would be every bit as disastrous to Great Britain as a losing war.

After a certain time, therefore—possibly another eight or ten years—the free markets where an adequate return upon the money spent in production can be expected, will be almost solely in tropical and sub-tropical countries, where the climatic, or natural, conditions render it impossible for the inhabitants to manufacture certain articles, just as the same conditions favour the growth and turning out of others.

India, China, South America and the East and West Indies, together with the east and west coasts of Africa and some of the South Sea Islands, are the territories which it would pay us best, in the long run, to cultivate, more especially as, in several of the countries named, the matter would be (as they are our possessions) one of consolidating rather than exploiting. This thesis must not be taken to apply, sweepingly, to all lines, as, naturally, there are certain articles which will always be in demand in highly-civilised countries

which are not applicable to less Europeanised domains, and *vice versâ*. At the same time, it would be considerably more rational and acting in accordance with the best of our racial traditions, to use all our endeavours in the perfecting and adapting of commodities for which we *are* famous rather than attempt, under the hysterical impetus of war fever, to create, in a few months, articles which our competitors have consummated only after years of experience and study and experiment.

The perfecting and modifying of our own "specialities" will entail, as these chapters will perhaps have conveyed, a bigger study of what other countries are doing, and an assimilation of the idea of what is needed by our customers. That, combined with a world-wide reputation for good value—even where the cheaper lines are in question—should procure for us all the expansion of commerce we need, or can deal with.

East and West Africa

The trade territories of East and West Africa are not unlike the arrangement of bricks and stones that go to the making of an arch. Cape Colony and the Transvaal form, as it were, the coping stone and Egypt the base—so far as Great Britain is concerned—the intermediate portions of the structure having been set in place by the British, Portuguese, Belgians, French and Germans.

The base and the coping stone are the most important and valuable, intrinsically; at the same

time, the commercial possibilities of the others are in no wise to be despised. On the west, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Ivory and Gold Coasts, Togoland, Nigeria, the Kameruns, French Congo, Portuguese West Africa, and the "relict" of Germany form a kind of international "crazy-quilt," whilst the east coast offers an equally variegated display of national colours in Abyssinia, British East Africa, German East Africa and Portuguese East Africa.

The trade of one is, so far as the cardinal features are concerned, the trade of all.

In olden times, ships went out laden with knives, glass beads and bangles, bales of cloth and cotton goods, brassware and looking-glasses, and though, with the march of progress, the foregoing articles have been slightly extended in scope and elaborated in degree, the general classification and description of the exports remain the same.

Where the coster girl dons an ostrich feather hat, the African native, who has come into touch with Europeans, affects a "billy-cock" or "topper"; where Mile End has a passion for "simulation" diamond brooches, the bloods of Nigeria, etc., consider it de rigueur to wear so many brass, copper or glass bangles, although the motive power behind each is exactly the same.

The principal requirements, then, are cheapness and "eye-appeal." It is no longer possible for the soldier (or sailor) of fortune to fit out a barquentine and set off for the "coast" with a

cargo of "trade goods," to bring back in due season ivory or gold. For one thing, the natives have become sophisticated, and do not show any marked desire to part with these articles (even if there remain any who possess them to part with), and the laws of the "Powers" would not allow of it for another. In addition, the supplies of ivory and gold, having become more or less exhausted or localised, less valuable, intrinsically, but equally valuable objectively, commodities such as copper, palm oil, rubber, copra and kola nuts have taken their place. And cargoes of these commodities would be too bulky for the individual trader to handle, even if it were otherwise possible for him to obtain them.

The instrumentality of the general store, therefore, is practically the only one which now affords the home merchant a vehicle for commerce, and it is the requirements of these latter which it is incumbent upon him to study.

Birmingham and Manchester goods of the cheapest, and some would say most trashy, description are most in request. Padlocks and tin trunks (of the kind once affected by domestic servants before compulsory education came in), pocket knives and razors, cheap jewellery and lamps, cheap socks and singlets, blankets and bicycles, gramophones and galvanised iron, and other articles of a like genre, too numerous to mention.

The general trading store, for which there is still an opening in the various territories on

the coast, has, in reality, to be a kind of local "Harrods," but with prices and classes of articles to be found in the penny and sixpence-halfpenny bazaars. A ring of such establishments, founded by a group of manufacturers, on the lines of "Woolworths," would pay hand over fist if run on a proper basis. Naturally, it would be well not to encroach upon the territories "preserved" by trading companies with a big connection already in possession.

Failing an operation such as the foregoing, the manufacturers' only alternative is to get into touch with the various trading companies concerned, and by a personal visit, or the procuring of samples of what has already found favour, learn what is needed. Then, if their factory scope permits, they can set to work to produce the goods.

(I am writing now in regard to such as have not already obtained a connection and wish to do so.)

All fragile or perishable articles should be packed, whenever possible, in tin-lined cases, and, when intended for the interior, the weight should not exceed fifty to sixty pounds. Catalogues for the French and Portuguese possessions *must* be printed in the language of the nation who owns the colony. The weights and measures must also be given on the metric system. It is absolutely useless sending out the ordinary home catalogue to the forementioned territories.

More business can be obtained by a commercial traveller who knows the coast, however, than in any other manner. But his catalogues must be

right and his samples effective. Advertising in the more popular journals and magazines—*Tit Bits, The Strand Magazine, Pearson's Weekly*, etc.—is also useful. The African native who has lived for some time in touch with Europeans is usually a go-ahead person. If an offer of some inexpensive trifle be made to enquirers, such as a calendar or pocket mirror, the application for catalogues from the " coast " will be fairly numerous. Whether the writers will purchase later is another matter. At the same time, the recipient is bound to show his plunder to his mates, and it is all good advertisement. The type of letters sent by the African and American negro are occasionally distinctly droll. Two are appended—the first from an American negro in San Francisco, the second from a native of Accra.

Only the names and addresses have been altered. The body of the letter preserves its pristine originality.

Mister Brown,
Golden Gate House,
San Francisco.

DERE FREND,

I got the valve which i by from you alrite but why for Gods sake doan you send me handle, i loose to me my customer shure ting. You doan treat me rite: is my money not so good as the other fellow. I wate ten days and my customer holler like hell by the valve. You know he is hot summer now and the win' he no blow the weel,

the valve she no got handle so wot the hel i goan to do. You doan sen' me the handle pretty quick i sen' her back and i goan order some valve from Jones companee

Good bye. Your friend
ANTONIO SILVER.

Since I rite these letter i fine the goddam handle in the bocks, excuse me.

High Street,
Accra.

DEAR SIR

Please I was so please to hear your name and address and it was much gratification to me. So therefore I shall be very glad to invited you and supply me with specila booklet act. I guarantee your catalogue will be most attractability in a good way. I hope nothing shall be better to wear like your shoes or anything good. I am understand your request and I believe truly that you will try your possible best and favour your booklet as quick as possible.

Please send me your new year catalogue for 1916 with fancy good, if I have receive fancy good frome you I shall cormend you to many friend of mine. I am truly sure that you will send your name and address together with your list, with best to wishe you merry Xmas to you. I wishe to receive something good from you as Xmas gift.

Yours Truly
JUSTUS A. D.

Although perhaps not so pregnant with naïve simplicity and mixed metaphor as some Babu effusions, such, for example, as a letter regarding an outbreak of plague :—" The sub-postmaster report that last evening a mice come out from behind office door and after walking a little stammered and breathed its last in presence of sub-postmaster. As this is prognostic of plague, please arrange "—they are undeniably joyful. There is an Irish touch about the first which a Babu would scarcely perpetrate. The second was evidently sent in error, as the firm to whom it was addressed did not manufacture boots, nor give away fancy goods. Nevertheless they broke the inability to comply with the writer's request as gently as possible.

In view of the taking over by Great Britain of German East Africa, and the fact that this territory, together with British East Africa, is a place not only exceedingly rich in various commodities but one where the climate is suitable to the European, there should be a very large opening for British enterprise. Indeed, it would not be at all surprising if, in a few years' time, Africa became an imperial holding every bit as important, if not more so, commercially, as India.

CHAPTER IX

Countries and Requirements—*continued*

South America, the West Indies and the Pacific

South America

THE Argentinos and the Brazileros will each tell you that their country is the better. They are as jealous of their national reputation as is a singing master of his technique as compared with the technique of other singing masters. As a matter of fact, there is really very little to choose between the two. If Buenos Aires can boast of finer buildings, Rio de Janeiro can claim a more picturesque site. If the Argentine " camps " can hold that their cattle, grain and horses are worth their weight in silver, the Brazilian coffee and rubber may be deemed amongst the finest produced. And if, like Herbert Spencer, we seek " to reach a point of view from which the seeming discordance of religion (as represented by the national glory of one) and science (as exhibited by the politic pride of the other) disappears and the two merge into one," it is safe to say it is made manifest in their common—and, latterly, chronic—impecuniosity.

There is a term used in China which, entitled

" squeeze," signifies, or stands for, the balance or difference between money received by a merchant, official or agent, for a certain purpose, and that which actually finds its way into the exchequer or lawful coffers.

It accounts for quite a number of things: for example, the reason why the food in an otherwise excellent hotel is inferior. Or why a small Government post, carrying only a small allowance, proves sufficiently lucrative, in practice, to allow the holder of the post to retire comfortably and do nothing, after a few years' tenure of office, for the remainder of his life.

" Comshaw " is somewhat similar, except that it is open and above board. You demand " comshaw " from a curio dealer in the shape of some trinket or carving after making a purchase from him. " Backsheesh " answers to a like definition so far as India and other Eastern countries are concerned—at times—though usually it is a call for alms.

But " squeeze " represents the high finance of the group.

I should opine that there is a considerable amount of " squeeze " in connection with a good many of the municipal and other official posts in South America, where revenue is handled. It is the only way to account for lots of things, amongst which may be included somewhat curious happenings relating to the customs houses. *Manana* (to-morrow) may have something to do with the instability of finance, as also the fever (some

years old now) of handling real estate on the " snowball " system.

In July, 1914, hearts were, however, comparatively light in that part of the world, as there was talk of a European loan, and people were planning how to spend the money. Harbour boards toyed with fascinating ideas of dock extensions; municipalities, with street and building improvements, and the " squeezers," with toothsome notions respecting new motor-cars, etc. The merchants were even speculating as to how soon they would be able to redeem various commodities from the " Douane " (*i.e.*, Alfandega), where they had lain for months and months and, in some cases, years. Unfortunately, other things occurred, and the loan fizzled out, so that the year's record for financial crashes in business circles was rendered still more epoch-making.

Possibly, however, the high prices latterly obtained for cattle, grain, horses, etc., may, in part, have recompensed the Argentinos, though the Brazileros are not likely to have received so much benefit.

However that may be, business has been very depressed for several seasons, particularly where expensive articles and luxuries were concerned—luxuries which the boom some time earlier had rendered so indispensable in the eyes of the successful " snowballers."

Numerous cases of merchandise rested, as already stated, in the customs until, in some instances, they were sold by the authorities to meet

charges. Occasionally they found their way into the hands of those to whom they had originally been consigned, but at a considerably reduced figure.

(Squeeze, it may be mentioned, works in a variety of ways.)

In certain essential lines, of course, trade has continued fairly steady, and possibly, after the war, will show a still further improvement, so that manufacturers will be well advised to be ready for the recuperation.

The Argentine and Brazil—the latter in particular—have been especially well exploited by German firms working in conjunction with German, or part German, banking houses which afforded considerable credit facilities. Uruguay offers a fairly reliable field, and is probably a more steady-going country than its neighbours. Chile is decidedly worth cultivating, and there is a marked preference there for British goods, as also in the picturesquely named, fiscally protean, republics in the north. Mexico, too, is well worth studying, as, unless it should become seriously embroiled with the U.S.A., there is an excellent market for British wares. The question of " exchange " has considerably militated against the placing of business here lately, but, in the hoped-for millennium after the war, rates may become more favourable.

As in the case of China and Russia, there is only one way of successfully opening up business relations, and that is through the medium of a

good foreign representative, speaking the language of the country.

The Argentine has probably seen its palmiest days. Like the lady of uncertain age and morals, it can look back on a past in which several alluring purple passages have been flung, but its principal hope now is a serene and respectable maturity.

Brazil, on the other hand, has not yet attained to puberty. The labour problem is the main obstacle to the further exploiting of the country. The European can't work there and the Brazilero won't ; so, until the Japanese or Chinese are admitted, the vast natural wealth of the land will remain practically untouched.

The Germans have managed to annex, however, more than a fair proportion of the trade—in fact, Rio Grande do Sul is, in part, almost a German colony. They have discovered that the best method of getting the business is by opening up an export house or branch in the country, from which quotations can be sent more expeditiously to out-of-the-way districts than from Europe, whilst their own staff is competent to get out estimates, suggestions and plans for any extensive schemes in connection with engineering matters that may crop up, so that the time is saved that would be otherwise lost in referring the enquiry on home. In addition, their travellers have a centre from which to conduct their campaign, and can obtain samples from the stocks held in the country.

If procrastination be the thief of time, then the character of many of the South Americans is open to grave moral doubts. He will do nothing until he has to, and even then, if he can get somebody else to bear the brunt, he will. He has neither the ingenuous bonhomie of the Russian, nor the enterprise of his Spanish or Portuguese ancestors. Neither is he, in the raw mass, picturesque, as the Balkan people, nor jovial, like some of his native forbears. He must have good points somewhere, naturally, but they are hidden very deeply, and, after the native of the East (on whom he would probably look down with mighty disgust), his mien and manner are not attractive.

At the same time, he has certain wants and desires in the matter of commerce, and, so long as he is looked after carefully, his business is fairly lucrative. Curiously enough, he does not, as a rule, favour commodities produced by the States. You will see fewer Ford cars—to take an example—in Rio or Buenos Aires than in any other part of the earth. His standard is the better-class European standard, so far as automobiles, clothing and furniture and fal-lals are concerned, so that that, if nothing else, should procure him our respectful consideration.

Being a country whose currency runs principally in the way of paper, commodities cost practically double as much as they do in Europe. The freights are fairly heavy and the duties on many articles not inconsiderable, so that the

bulk of the things supplied have, of necessity, to bear a fairly low initial cost to render them even moderately cheap when landed in South America.

Shirts, singlets, socks, and cotton checks for the labouring classes, with enamelware and hardware, glassware and pottery, are mostly in demand, whilst drugs, boots and shoes, and cutlery find a ready sale. Furniture and woodwork, fencing wire and galvanised iron products are also universally wanted. In the large cities such as, for instance, Buenos Aires, Valparaiso, Rio de Janeiro and Monte Video, the standard of living and luxury amongst the upper and middle classes is high—so long as the money lasts. Jewellery and plate, expensive furniture and English clothing and stuffs are the order of the day. One or two of the big British stores have opened up in Buenos Aires, but the demand for long credits, of necessity, inflate the prices demanded and, in consequence, limits the turnover. Amongst the native storekeepers of the better class, whose clientèle numbered some of the more aristocratic and tardy-paying residents, matters had become very serious, even before the war. Quite a number had to resort to " voluntary liquidation sales " to get in a little ready money. In some of the principal thoroughfares it was a little distressing at first to see shop after shop displaying " liquidation sale " bills, until explanation was made that actually the announcements only corresponded to the British spring and summer sales. Many of

the smaller boutiques held auction sales two or three times a week. As for those to whom either of the foregoing methods of raising the "ready" wind were, for some or other reason, debarred, the proprietors simply sat down and philosophically smoked cigarettes, and waited in the hope that one of the many state lottery prizes would come their way.

As regards the smaller republics, the only satisfactory way of "getting in" is by studying the conditions and business houses *in situ*.

There is, as a rule, no great difficulty in finding an able agent on the spot—if the business is not such as to warrant the Continental plan of establishing a branch—but manufacturers should be extremely careful as regards opening up business by letter, otherwise goods may be sent out—after the first few consignments have been promptly paid for as a bait—against sight draft; the bill will not be taken up, and the goods will remain in the customs until they are either shipped back home at considerable loss or sold by the authorities (after much fruitless correspondence with the consignee) at a ridiculous figure—probably, as already indicated, to the consignee himself.

No, the South American business—save in a few exceptional cases, where it is conducted through, perhaps, a firm of buying agents who, having connections on the other side, relieve the manufacturer of all responsibilities and a little larger discount—is, as New York would say, "some"

proposition, and needs very careful handling. At the same time, a good trade has been done, and it should be better later on, if due arrangements are made and careful nursing given.

The West Indies and the Pacific

Although the islands of the West Indies do not offer such great opportunities as those of the East Indies, the markets are decidedly attractive in certain lines.

The native inhabitants have no caste prejudices, nor traditional rites to conform to (an isolated case of voodooism may crop up occasionally, but it is the exception that proves the rule), so that their manners and customs are more of the Occidental than Oriental nature.

Usually the islanders, in the West Indies, pride themselves on their European polish. They are far more openly patriotic than the Britisher, and the darker their hue the more pronounced is their claim to Anglicisation. The principal trade is in the hands of British and European houses in the various islands—there is very little bazaar trade, as it is known in the East—and the demand is principally for cheap editions of home goods.

The West Indies, no doubt, have a certain fascination for the European residents, but, from the outsider's point of view, the standard of attractiveness, as compared with the spice islands of the East, is very low.

The workaday costumes of the natives are neither picturesque nor have they any traditional

interest. The print skirt and bodice (now often made, in the manner of a gown, in one piece) pictured in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is the almost universal feminine attire. In mufti, the men affect cotton singlets and duck, dungaree or corduroy trousers; of an evening, a jacket and a red neck handkerchief are the equivalent for full dress. In the outlying districts, the "local colour" may possess a more robust atmosphere, but in the neighbourhood of the ports, Rastus and his dusky spouse do not shed anything that could, by even the widest stretch of imagination, be called a "glamour" on the picture.

The scenery is often fine, but galvanised iron, though a valuable commodity commercially, damns irretrievably the most picturesque surroundings when applied indiscriminately. And galvanised iron for roofs, walls and other purposes, has caught on in nearly all the equatorial regions more potently even than trade gin. Local governments condone with the one, be it noted, and frown on the other.

The proximity of the States has had a considerable effect upon the commerce of the various settlements. The Panama Canal, when it becomes a reliable route for maritime traffic, is likely to have still more far-reaching consequences. For, whereas the first has militated to an extent against us by reason of the shorter sailing distance and lower freights and the production on a larger scale of certain articles, the latter, by placing the islands more in the general route of traffic and

thus rendering them more accessible, should serve to augment our commerce very considerably. In view, therefore, of the Panama route, it might pay manufacturers to use Jamaica, for example, as a base—a half-way house from which to feed the West Coast of America, Cuba and the other territories and islands in the proximity. By so doing, especially where machinery, electrical supplies, etc., are concerned, estimates could be handled with less loss of time and deliveries given from stock. The plan would entail opening up a branch house with warehouse accommodation, but the cost should easily be covered, and more than covered, by the increased turnover.

In the smaller South American Republics and in the islands generally, British goods are preferred so long as the prices demanded do not exceed by too great an extent those asked for foreign and American commodities, and a clearing house such as suggested would render it much easier to keep in touch with the different centres.

Hardware and enamelware of the cheaper grades, sewing machines, musical instruments, ready-made clothes (of the type usually found in a sailing ship's slop chest) and articles of haberdashery find a good sale in the West Indies. The cheaper sewing machines are usually of Continental origin and, with cheap bicycles and gramophones, form practically a staple commodity the world over. The sale of motor-cars is not extensive, except for the small cheap vehicle such as the Ford. If British manufacturers were able to

produce something on similar lines, but costing a little more and with a European finish, the demand all over the world would be colossal.

Stationery and fancy goods afford a fair sale, also straw hats and cheap jewellery.

As a rule, the natives of the West Indies are not so difficult to satisfy as those of the East. Goods that carry the cachet of British style, as shown by their resemblance to those illustrated in the home periodicals, are sure to find favour amongst the dusky fraternity with ultra-British aspirations.

The Islands of the Pacific—the beauty spots of the earth—scattered and far away, as a rule, from all regular trade routes, are practically the sole surviving centres which still depend for their supplies on the old-fashioned trading schooners. A few, in the larger groups, owned by companies who have exploited them on account of the ever-increasing value of "copra," or because they afford convenient ports of call, are now visited fairly regularly by steamships. But with the majority, the "trading schooner" is still the only method which offers communication with the outside world.

The trade is more or less a specialised one and handled from Australia, or, in some cases, New Zealand, and, as such, will scarcely appeal, even indirectly, to the British manufacturer. Nevertheless, the South Sea Islands would offer a profitable outlet in the event of home manufacturers considering the production of the afore-

mentioned cheap sewing machines and other low-priced trade goods. Nature, however, is so beneficent that the wants, in general, of the South Sea islanders are comparatively few, so far as manufactured articles are concerned.

Cotton prints, calicoes and muslins, tinned provisions, lamps and chocolates, axes and knives, pottery, mostly for show, a few articles in the haberdashery line and the inevitable cheap looking-glass, make up pretty well the sum total—if one excepts perfumes, medicines, watches and alarm clocks, bicycles and gramophones on certain of the islands, where civilisation is a little further advanced.

The South Seas offer nowadays practically the only chance of a return to the simple life under absolutely ideal conditions. Unfortunately, they lie in the most inaccessible portion of the globe, and, in consequence, quite beyond the beat of the average British traveller with a couple of months on his hands in which to recuperate.

Perhaps, in a way, this is just as well, for those who do reach them, unless particularly strong-minded, generally succumb to their charm and slothfulness and never get away again—for long, at any rate. As a refuge for the followers of the line of least resistance—so long as that line is not hedged on either side with whisky bottles—they are probably as near to perfection as anything the world has to offer. The only one that "fails" is Hawaii, which has become permeated with the spirit of the United States and is thus an

anachronism. Occasionally, when one or two damsels whose great grandfathers were white, but whose great grandmothers were otherwise, gather together and, for amusement, condescend to dance the "Hula," the old spirit of the island rears its head. In their 'Frisco dresses, silk stockings, Paris shoes and hats, they resemble, at a distance, not very remotely the damsels to be met in Market Street, San Francisco. But when the spirit of the Hula rises and their hair becomes ruffled, the old primitive savage peers through the mask which civilisation has set before it and the result is startling, to say the least.

Honolulu is not such a far cry, but it is doubtful if the British manufacturer or his representative is very likely to seek the Marquesas or the Solomons. If once he arrived at one of the palm-fringed atolls of those regions, it is doubtful whether he would have strength of purpose sufficient to set it behind him again without a struggle. It is more probable that he would be overcome with a sense of the futility of commerce, and, in its place, evolve a new and splendid "Omar Khayyam" philosophy of *dolce far niente*. And as this is the last thing we should desire, at the present time, in conjunction with honourable manufacturers, perhaps it will be as well to say straight away that it is not absolutely necessary to make a personal visit to this territory.

CHAPTER X

The Foreign Representative

THE successful foreign representative, like the poet, is born, not made. His qualifications are elusive ones—or perhaps I should say negative—as opposed to obvious and positive. His business in life is not so much to push his ware as to realise the exact psychological moment *when* to call attention to their existence and merits, and the occasions when to mention them would be a mistaken policy. He should possess the wisdom of the serpent with the (apparent) mildness of the dove. He should have the instinctive flair of a horsedealer, for seizing an opportunity, and the persuasive tact and dramatic insight of a war correspondent for lighting on crises. In addition, his knowledge of his fellow men and poise of understanding should be such as to enable him to meet on an equal footing the owner of a hole in the wall bazaar-stall, the general manager of a New York departmental store or the highly conservative senior partner in an old-established trading concern. A man with the foregoing qualifications, added, possibly, to a knowledge of three or four languages, *should* be an ambassador, minister for foreign affairs, or prime minister.

But the shallow ruck of party politics would not adequately recompense for the abandoning of a life coloured by real people and aims. He prefers, therefore, as a rule, like a humble flower, to blush —more or less—unseen, and continue booking orders and fixing up agencies for Messrs. Brown, Johns & Robinson. There is more zest in it.

There are comparatively few British concerns who send lady representatives abroad, with the exception of a few corset and dress makers. In some ways, possibly, this is a pity, though not in others. Where new ground is concerned, there is more selling ability in a pretty woman's drooped eyelash than in half-a-dozen New York drummers —and, goodness knows, they waste very few chances. If the male traveller were, or could be, by nature endowed with the tenacity and bargaining ability of a woman—handling a proposition in regard to the marriage market, for example—his employers would be multi-millionaires in no time.

On the other hand, the appeal of sex, where business is concerned, is rarely entirely satisfactory compared with the establishment, between buyer and seller, of mutual good faith and friendship. A sales connection created under the auspices of the first-named is unstable, particularly if a prettier representative turns up on behalf of a rival firm. An entente on the latter plan, however, not only endures but grows with the years.

Generally speaking, it is in effecting this particular kind of rapprochement that the British "foreign representative" is so successful.

The "foreign" representative, smart as he undeniably is in many ways, lacks the psychology — or knowledge of it—to get ever really en rapport with his customers. It is the elasticity of the terms he offers that gains orders. He himself is either too obsequious or too overbearing to put business on the basis of a friendly deal. The German diplomacy is formed on the same model—it is either a bribe or a blow, and if both these fail, the deluge.

At the same time, the British "foreign representative" can learn many useful things from the foreigner. His infinite capacity for taking pains is one, and his enterprise in finding markets off the beaten track. Where the average Britisher would visit only the principal towns in a district, the German would explore the smaller centres, and gradually work them up until the yield equalled, if it did not exceed, that of the more public marts. His is the intensive as opposed to the rule-of-thumb cultivation, and, in the next few years, it is the "intensive" cultivation that is going to count, if we wish to bolster up our foreign trade beyond any possibility of wreckage. In getting business, just as in all other matters appertaining to life, it is the first steps that count. The "roving commission" may be fascinating in theory, but it rarely leads to anything very definite nowadays in the matter of results. A well-thought-out plan of campaign is necessary, and the initial phase in the campaign is the mapping out of a tour. This will depend, naturally, to a great

extent, on the type of business handled and the agencies already in existence. Some of these latter may be showing a profitable turnover, in which case a visit to the agent may, unless ample time is available, be left over until a more convenient period. Others may show a dropping off in sales, and the territories in question should be included in the itinerary. The main consideration, however, is usually the opening up of new ground.

It may be taken for granted that there are very few foreign representatives who would, on an extended tour, start with Africa, come back to Europe, cross to the West Indies, and wend their way back to India and the East, *viâ* the Cape. If such persons existed, the firms who employ them and would sanction such an ideal trip do not.

Europe and Asia are quite easily and economically negotiated in one itinerary, however; Africa and Australia in another, and South America and the West Indies in a third—or the latter can be profitably embodied by way of Yokohama and San Francisco, on the Asian trip. By the time the foregoing have been dealt with, it will be necessary to start all over again. In certain lines, also, it is much better to make a visit to the various territories just before their buying season. Agricultural countries should, for example, be dealt with before or after harvest time. India is best tackled when the hot weather coma has departed—that is to say, from November to March. South Africa and Australia may advisably

be visited in the spring—which falls, it should be remembered, at an exactly opposite time of the year to ours. In all cases the principal cities and towns should be made bases for the reception of fresh samples, catalogues, etc., from home, and from which side-trips can be made to the outlying districts. In a great many instances, a round tour can be planned, in which the principal places can be visited practically in a circle. With Russia a start can be made at Petrograd, then the Baltic provinces, Moscow, Kiev and Odessa on the one side or Petrograd, Moscow, Nijni Novgorod and Siberia on the other. With India, disembarkation can be effected at Colombo (Ceylon), and from thence a circular rail tour to Bombay by way of Madras, Karachi (by boat), Lahore, Delhi, Agra and on to Calcutta. The Central Provinces may easily be reached from Bombay or Calcutta, whilst the latter port is the principal starting place for Burmah and the F.M.S. If preferred, an alternative tour can be effected through Russia, Siberia, on to Japan by rail, and thence, by way of China, the F.M.S. and Dutch Indies to Burmah and India, or from Singapore to Australia by the Great Barrier Reef route. It is as well to remember that, although sea travelling is the more pleasant, it is considerably more costly in point of time occupied, if nothing else; so, wherever possible, the railroad should be followed.

In the case of heavy samples, it is much better to take a few—enough for a certain amount of territory—to start with, and have relays

despatched by boat to the principal ports of call. Sea freight is cheaper than rail charges, and too many packages make for considerable difficulty, sometimes, in getting about. Possibly, in some instances, this will not be feasible, but only in a small minority. A circular note of credit should be established, either with Cook's or through the agency of one of the principal banks. Correspondence in the majority of countries is best directed to the bank or Cook's agent, unless definite headquarters are available. In Russia, however, it is best sent "care of the British Consul."

The standing of the firm represented will, as a rule—except where previous connection has been established—be deduced from the manner and mien of the foreign representative, and it is therefore important that only the best hotels should be used. If, as in many cases, the hospitality of a club be offered, all "shop" should be left behind, without exception, on the threshold. It *may* happen that some question of business will be brought up by the instigator of the hospitality, but, unless it is, the subject should be strictly taboo. In calling upon business houses, the shortest possible statement of your object, compatible with lucidity, should be given—on a first visit. A courtesy call, with a chat upon home affairs, as you left them, will be appreciated and usually lead to business later, but a preliminary visit, in which much time is occupied in explaining your raison d'être in the scheme of things, is apt to be boring.

It is far better to pay six short calls and drop a few pearls of information at each, clinching the business at a friendly dinner later, than it is to pay two or three and leave behind you an atmosphere of dreary verbosity as unilluminating to the average person as a book on bi-metallism.

Where, however, the buyers are natives and have to be sought in the bazaars or "godowns," hospitality is practically out of the question so far as meeting at an hotel is concerned, unless the individual is very Europeanised. A Hindu will probably offer you a cold drink—lemon or raspberryade—and a Chinaman or Japanese, tea, which it is policy to accept. In the case of the Chinaman, the tea is generally brought when the interview, to his mind, has lasted sufficiently long, and the visitor should not linger after its arrival.

With some Hindus and Chinese, days may elapse before the order is settled. The conversation will often turn on everything *but* business. It is by adapting himself, therefore, to the customers' devious ways, courteously and good-humouredly, that one representative will score over another.

The Japanese, so far as the merchants who do business with Europe are concerned, on the other hand, are fairly quick in arriving at a decision.

The principal objective of the man who wishes to obtain success in dealing with the people of the Orient is to submerge the individual ego and *think*, so far as possible, along the lines of reasoning peculiar to the Oriental. Some men fall into the knack in a very short time; others never attain

to it. There are many commission agents and merchants in India whose business lies principally with the native states who, through much association with the native mind, actually *become* native themselves, so far as the mental processes and reasoning are concerned—of course, for the time being only. How a person may err by being too absorbed in the personal equation, particularly in the East, is shown by the following narrative dealing with two rival sages at the court of Akbar the Great, at Delhi, in the sixteenth century.

It is related that a—reputed—very learned "Moulvie" of Persia wished to overcome in argument the "Mulla" Do-Peaza—a famous wit, and a day for the trial of skill was appointed with due pomp and flourish.

On the appointed morning, the Mulla prepared for the campaign by obtaining a number of asses, mules and buffaloes, laden with panniers, into which he placed a quantity of sand and rubble with a "top dressing" of books and pamphlets. On the panniers he placed labels bearing strange names, such as "Gadha-ul-Tafseer," "Bhensa-ul-Rikab," "Khachchar-ul-Hikmut," and many others. He then donned an enormous turban, the length of which was so great that he had to employ a page to carry it. As soon as he approached the court, he caused the animals with their panniers to be drawn up in a semi-circle, within the courtyard facing the audience (durbar) hall of the palace.

When the Persian saw how he was dressed, he

asked him in astonishment: "What is it you have done, Mulla Sahib?"—to which the Mulla answered: "Do you not know the saying, 'Let the size of your turban be in proportion to your knowledge'?" and, so saying, he took his seat.

Eventually the discussion started, and the Moulvie, for all his learning, was no match for the Mulla's ready wit. The former at length arose, and with the desire, apparently, to test the Mulla's knowledge of signs and symbols, held up his forefinger.

The Mulla held up two fingers in reply.

On the Moulvie showing three fingers, the Mulla countered with four, and when the Moulvie concluded by showing his palm, the Mulla, not to be outdone, replied by stretching out his fist.

The Moulvie, evidently at a loss, pondered for a few minutes, and at length, as a seemingly irrefutable argument, produced an egg from his pocket and showed it to the Mulla, who, not to be put down, dived into *his* pocket and haled forth an onion.

The Moulvie, baffled, then demanded on what authority the Mulla made his statements, to which the latter, in reply, gave the names of the books with which the panniers were laden. The Persian, surprised, had to confess he heard the mysterious names for the first time; whereupon the Mulla retorted: "If you have not even heard the names, you will have to live as long as Noah to master their contents. Look out of the windows and see how many books I have brought

with me." The Moulvie did so, and, on viewing such an extensive library, as he thought, sat down and owned himself bested.

As nobody present had been able to make head or tail of the discussion, the Emperor Akbar beckoned the Moulvie to him and requested, in an aside, to be informed what the Mulla had said in symbols, and what reply the Moulvie had made.

"Wah!" said the Persian, "your Mulla is a very clever man. When I held up one finger, meaning that God is one, he showed me two, meaning that He is the Creator of the two worlds —this and the next. On my displaying three fingers, meaning that, in animal life, there are three salient stages—conception, birth, and death —he displayed four to indicate that the animal body contains four elements—earth, air, fire and water. Then I showed him my palm to manifest that there are five persons most blessed by God namely, the Prophet, Ali, Fatma, Hassan and Husain—whereupon he showed me his fist, to demonstrate that God was their strength and support.

"As a final test, I brought out an egg, which is a model of our earth and the heavens—the shell representing the sky which surrounds the earth on all sides. He then displayed an onion, meaning that the sky was composed of layers and layers, like those of an onion. Now I knew there were nine heavens, but I was not prepared to admit there were as many as there are layers to an onion, so I asked him on what authority he made

the assertion. He replied by giving me the names of books of which I had never heard, let alone read. Verily the Mulla is a true sage."

The Moulvie then took his leave, so Akbar called the Mulla on one side and requested his version of the sign conversation.

"Well, it was quite simple, your Majesty," responded the Mulla. "When he saw he couldn't get the better of me in words, the Moulvie became angry and pointed a finger at me—meaning that he wanted to poke his finger in my eye. Naturally I showed him two to let him know that, if he did, I should pluck out both of his. He then displayed three, which plainly meant he would like to give me three kicks, so I held up four to explain that I should, in that case, return the compliment with four of them. When he showed his palm, meaning he would like to slap my face, I put up my fist to show I should like to knock him down. Consequently, seeing I was up to all his dodges, he decided it was better to be friendly and offered me an egg. Of course I couldn't be outdone, so I offered him an onion to make an omelet of it."

The moral of the foregoing is to illustrate that it is advisable, when dealing with a stranger, to find out his point of view and make certain that he has also grasped yours. Otherwise, even if misunderstandings do not occur, the perfect rapprochement which should exist between buyer and seller will be exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to obtain.

CHAPTER XI

The Foreign Representative—*continued*

THE psychology of the various nations, as regards their point of view, is too abstruse a matter with which to deal fully here, extending, as it does, to so many branches of motives, thoughts and actions. At the same time, the capability for absorbing a knowledge of that psychology—at all events, as applied to the proposition of "purchase"—is one of the principal factors in the making of a successful foreign representative. He may not be able to put his knowledge into concrete words—he may, possibly, not be aware that he possesses it; nevertheless, if it is not inherent in him, if he is not *interested* in the personality of his customers, he has missed his vocation in taking to the great high-road.

There is really mighty little difference between the gentleman of the highway of olden times and the modern "box wallah," with the exception that the one carried pistols instead of samples and used a horse instead of the railway or steamship, that is, so far as the business of obtaining favours is concerned. Dick Turpin knew, ere ever he drew rein at a hold-up, pretty well what kind of a haul he would make—by the

trappings of the coach and the furnishings of the passengers. And the same reasoning applies, with practically the same force, where the question of obtaining business or appointing agents is concerned.

The attitude in which a man sits, the play of his features, his method of scribbling, while talking, on scraps of paper, as if to clarify his ideas in his own mind, the condition of his desk, the size and weight of his watch-chain, the manner in which he does his hair, his clothes and boots, even the way in which his pencils are pointed, are all practically infallible guides to his character—and, consequently, to his approachability—when observed aright, so far, at all events, as Europeans and colonials are concerned.

In the case of Asiatics, the signs are more subtle, and, consequently, somewhat more difficult to read. In the East, the habit of dress, whether European clothes are worn or no, and the attitude and accoutrements of a man's servants are, however, usually enlightening.

The foreign representative should know which man is a Hindu and which a Mahommedan—the Parsi and Armenian are practically unmistakeable—and the various subdivisions of the Hindus and their traditional attire, as such knowledge will, if nothing else, prevent his offending any caste susceptibilities. The higher castes usually wear the caste mark painted on their foreheads, but some of the middle classes—if so they may be termed—omit it. The Marwarri is supposed to be

the keenest bargainer (apart from the Parsi) in India; so with him, more than with most, it is necessary to bargain for a considerable period, often, before a deal is clinched.

The Asiatic races, the Russian and the inhabitants of South America are nearly all exceedingly suspicious and need very careful handling. If good terms are offered straightaway, they are prone to believe that there is a catch somewhere, so that the first object of the salesman will have to be to instil thoroughly into them the feeling that he is trustworthy. At a first interview, very often, business is scarcely mentioned, the polite fiction being upheld that the visitor has called merely out of courtesy. Early morning, at his own bungalow, is the best time to tackle the Indian buyer, when it comes down to a matter of brass tacks and the preliminaries have been safely cleared away. The Russian is most approachable after lunch, and the South American in the early noon. Each nationality has its own idiosyncrasies, and the foreign representative should study carefully the auspicious occasions. Some Eastern races are extremely superstitious, and will not do business on certain days. The Chinaman is less exigent; the main thing to remember, when calling upon him, is not to stay too long, unless pressed. An Englishman clinches a deal usually when standing up; an American, walking round and round or about the room; and an Asiatic, squatting or sitting; so that much more persuasion is needed with the

last named. And in the East, except where the better-class Chinaman is in question, no deal is ever *really* clinched until the agreement or order is *signed*. The Argentinos and Brazileros are prone to agree with the traveller out of politeness, and very often will contradict—diplomatically but firmly—any idea which they may have given at a previous interview that a matter was definitely settled. With a Chinaman as with the Englishman, his word is sufficient; at the other end of the scale comes the Japanese, whose bond is not *always* what it appears to be.

It should, as a rule, be remembered that the time when the European is soliciting a sale is about the only time that the Oriental is, temporarily, top dog, and the latter cannot, therefore, be blamed for making the most of his hour. Some natives can take chaff and like it, but a tactful deference (though this should not be overdone even when dealing with the Rajah Log —native princes) is usually the most satisfactory "platform" to adopt. Superiority never pays—though this is as true in the West as in the East.

Where the United States are concerned, the American prides himself upon his frankness, as also does the colonial to a certain extent. The dividing line between frankness and rudeness is occasionally very narrow. It is consoling, however, to remember that in the newer countries morals are deemed of more account than manners, or are supposed to be. In the older civilisations,

" manners " come first, and the amenities are, consequently, more easily preserved.

There is nothing in the world so interesting to man as the study of mankind; yet, by the ordinary business man, it is probably a study which, if considered at all, is only considered subconsciously and without method. A successful business man—one who is every day brought into contact with a number of other men—becomes able to " size up " instinctively his visitors and classify them into certain types. But, as a rule, the process is purely instinctive, and he would be quite unable to give any definite reason for the formulating of his opinions. In the man whose duties keep him at home, the lack of method in basing his deductions does not matter much, but in the traveller and foreign salesman, some distinct process of reasoning should precede his arrival at a definite conclusion.

In Rudyard Kipling's " Kim," it will perhaps be remembered that when Kim was undergoing his training, before being made use of in the " great game," he had to spend many hours squatting on the floor of " Lurgan sahib's " shop in the bazaar at Simla, taking note of all who came and went. At the end of the day, he was called upon to give a résumé of what he had seen, the people who had visited the shop, his opinion as to the business upon which they had come, and his reasons for arriving at that opinion.

Although it is possibly not feasible for the foreign representative to carry out exactly such

a plan of campaign, yet he should always be studying his fellow-men with a view to diagnosing their characters, walk in life, and how they would probably act under certain conditions. A man who has obtained knowledge of this nature, apart from the interest which he will find in acquiring it, will never need to fear being left upon his " uppers." For, in so training his mental faculties, he will have gained something which—perhaps most easily described as personal magnetism—will render him able not only to see an opportunity before the majority of his fellows, but which will have given him the power to know exactly how to approach the person who controls the opportunity afforded.

On shipboard, in the train or 'bus, at the street corner or café, there will always be something fresh and novel to observe and learn, even at home, and, needless to say, the opportunities abroad will be multiplied a thousandfold. It is practically impossible, in a short book such as this, to go deeply into the psychology of the various countries, to say nothing of the variations shown by the inhabitants of different portions of those countries. At the same time, a few rough pointers may not be out of place. To begin with, even the most unobservant person must be aware of the difference between, say, a Cornishman, an Irishman, a Yorkshireman and a Scotchman. They are so obvious, and the illustrations are of such everyday occurrence, that the distinctions are noted unthinkingly by the majority.

Where other nations are concerned, however, the average Britisher has the unfortunate habit of lumping together all of them into one class, viz., "foreigners." He may go so far as to formulate the opinion that he likes the French and detests the Germans; but that is, usually, so far as he gets.

Now this is manifestly absurd. There is every bit as much difference between a Provençal and a Parisian as there is between a Cornishman and a Scotchman, *and* the difference lies, to a great extent, in the same direction. When it comes to national characteristics, the differences are even more strongly marked.

If one were inclined to be didactic—and possibly a little cynical also—one can hold that, to arrive most speedily at the "make-up" of a people, one has only to examine their behaviour under two stimulæ: that of love-making and that of money-making. Those who pursue the first mentioned most effectively rarely score in the latter and, of course, *vice versâ*—that is, where the love-making is genuine and not embarked upon (as is the case with a portion of the French nation) as a business.

The peoples who regard love-making as a definite business are, as a rule, shallow, and have a particularly keen appreciation of the value of money. Those, on the other hand, who are genuinely swayed by the emotions, are much more generous and usually unpractical. An agricultural people is shy, and suspicious to the

extent of overreaching its own interests; but, once the initial shyness is overcome, it is capable of considerable loyalty and friendliness. A manufacturing people, however, is more gregarious in its attributes, but the quality of suspiciousness, though not so apparent to view, lies deeper, and is much more difficult to overcome. Persons of this class have, as a rule, many acquaintances, but few friends.

Here, then, are two fairly reliable bases from which a start, at least, can be made by the observer.

To the first class, where the emotions rule the head, belong the Poles, Russians and, to some extent, the Austrians; also, in a lesser degree, the inhabitants of the East and West Indies. In India proper and China the people may, however, be regarded more or less as a class alone, by reason of the small esteem in which women are held. Their innate secretiveness is also foreshadowed by the fact that, with them, conversation anent their womenfolk is taboo. To the latter body belong the Latin races — French, Spanish, Italians, and the inhabitants of South America—that is to say, with this body, love-making is more of an art than a deep-seated emotion.

Heart and head are fairly evenly balanced with the British and those of British descent, and the same remark applies to Norwegians—in fact, Scandinavians generally. The problem with these races is, therefore, more of an individual nature

than is the case with the Slav and Latin races. Climate must naturally be taken into account when forming the preliminary diagnosis of an individual "make-up." The men of Northern India—Sikhs, Peshwarris, etc.—are quite different from the Madrassi and Tamils of Southern India—just as the nature of the Highlander is different from that of the Cornishman, and that of a town-dweller from that of a farm labourer.

The foregoing "leaders" will, however, possibly give the traveller an idea as to the type of individual he may expect to have to do business with in different parts of the world. As I have already stated, it is impossible, in the space here available, to do more than adumbrate a plan upon which each man can work for himself.

The foreign representative cannot be expected to know thoroughly more than three languages in addition to his own, unless he is a born linguist, a German or a Swiss. At the same time, it is an excellent plan, and not very difficult, to obtain, at least, a healthy smattering of the vernacular of the countries in which he is doing business. There are several hours each day on shipboard, when affairs are slack, which offer favourable opportunities for a little light study. The best time is probably after the inner man is fortified by breakfast and sustained by the morning air, as this period has the advantage of being an off-season, as a rule, where games and sports are concerned. In the afternoon, sloth descends upon the multitude, so that the general atmosphere is

scarcely conducive to study. It is wonderful, however, what can be accomplished by the steady application to a good grammar or text-book for a couple of hours a day on a fortnight's sea-voyage.

A collection of the country's proverbs is often decidedly enlightening in the matter of indicating the viewpoint of a particular nationality. An apt quotation also of an apposite epigram in the foreigner's own tongue will sometimes serve as a linchpin to close a deal. A collection of the various national proverbs was published some little time ago, giving the original text on one page and an English translation opposite. The easiest way to learn a language is supposed to be under the instruction of one of the countrywomen, and the popular supposition is fairly correct. As a rule, a male foreigner wishes to pick up the visitor's language—when he does not know it already—and insists on speaking in English, whereas a woman prefers to teach the newcomer her own. There are sometimes difficulties in the consummation of this system, however; so that a good text-book is perhaps safer.

It should be remembered that, generally speaking, the European is more receptive, as a rule, to auditory impressions, whilst the Asiatics' mental activity is best stimulated by visual ones. That is to say, the people of the Occident think in words, where the Oriental thinks in pictures. This being so, analogy and metaphor will carry more conviction in explaining a proposition to an

Eastern buyer than the terse, nervous, almost bald statements with which its advantages would be best demonstrated to a European. For example, the latter might be informed that a certain kind of lamp was "windproof" and of so many "candle-power," and the words would carry the requisite meaning to his brain. With an Oriental, on the other hand, a remark to the effect that it possessed the perfection and illuminating power of the full moon would produce a mental understanding of far greater potency, simply because the metaphor would be one that he could more easily assimilate by reason of his habit of gaining impressions by visualisation.

The illustration given is not intended to be taken absolutely literally, but only as a pointer to the Asiatic's mode of perception—a mode which is very akin to that of the infantile and senile mind.

To put the whole matter pithily, the foreign representative requires to be imbued with the spirit of cosmopolitanism as opposed to the letter only.

If trade is to be kept as well as procured, the foreign representative, on behalf of the manufacturer, must have his finger dead on the pulse of local feeling, in the matter of change and fashion. In this direction a camera is an excellent aid. It is not always possible to obtain samples of the type of article required by a certain territory, but it is usually an easy matter to take a photograph of the article the foreign buyer desires

to be copied or reproduced. A collection of prints of the various commodities in demand, to show possibly the special method of wrapping or "make-up," is almost as valuable as a selection of the commodities themselves. In addition, a snapshot of interesting details relevant to certain lines is often productive of new ideas on the manufacturer's part—ideas which may turn out to be of great monetary value. Photographs of local posters, indicative of the type of advertising which appeals most to the native eye, are also useful, whilst pictures dealing with methods of handling, trading, the native bazaars, etc., will come in, often, extremely handy for illustrating trade articles in the press or in the drawing up of advertisements.

The roll-film camera will be found the most convenient and least cumbersome, and it has the advantage that the standard-sized films are obtainable nearly everywhere.

To supplement a pictorial record of trade, the traveller should make a practice of amplifying his observations by jotting down in a note-book any odd ideas or impressions which may occur to him on the spot. He will quickly find that, by so doing, his knowledge of matters, not only relating to his own particular line but many others, will become more and more comprehensive and may, at a future date, be extremely useful. Statistics relating to the various commodities imported can usually be obtained from Government publications, but, as a rule, no detailed description is

available of the articles themselves. For instance, a table may be published showing that so much chinaware is annually imported into a certain territory, but no information will be given as to the exact type of articles which go to make up the quantity. If the traveller keeps a photographic record he will be aware, however, that in one district jugs of a "pot-bellied" pattern are favoured, whilst, in another close adjoining, the long, amphora-shaped receptacles may be de rigueur. The colours and patterns of textiles should be noted, and the style and finish of furniture; whilst special terms regarding the modes of payment in vogue in the different districts should be entered up, together with a résumé of the retail prices prevalent. The foreign representative must be in a position to judge whether the local selling figure is a fair one, as otherwise the interests of the manufacturer will, in the long run, suffer. A certain margin must of course be allowed for the cost of importation; in the East, for example, the average extra cost demanded over that ruling at home varies from 15 to 33⅓ per cent. on cheap articles and 5 to 15 per cent. on more expensive goods.

If the percentage is too high, the demand will be prejudiced, and if too low, there will be price-cutting, which may reflect upon the supplier in the event of his making a change of agents at a future date.

In travelling through India, Burmah, the F.M.S. and Dutch East Indies, a native servant (bearer

or boy) is a desideratum. It is possible to travel without, but not customary, and a really good "boy" will save his wages in the prevention of outside overcharges. At the same time, he is very useful in obtaining information as to the standing and integrity of local firms—particularly when a bazaar trade is in question.

In China, Japan, Russia, Siberia, and the civilised portions of South America and Africa, a personal servant is not necessary; the procedure in the case of the first two named being to annex one of the hotel boys and, by judicious backsheesh, win him to your sole allegiance.

By the behaviour and bearing of a man's "boy," so shall you know the man himself. It is wise, therefore, to use care and discretion in engaging the servant. Even the best "boys" will require watching, as they take their tone from their master. The bad ones have, as a rule, been spoiled by the foreigner—American, German, etc. The German's native servant either cringes or blusters. The American's is familiar—the reason being that the German is prone either to cajole or kick and the American to fraternise too much. The type of servant to be found prowling round, with numbers of dubious "chits" (characters), the principal hotels is to be, as a rule, strenuously avoided. The best plan is to wait until one can be obtained through the recommendation of a friendly local resident.

Where new territory is being opened up, it is as well for the traveller to make known his advent

by judicious advertising in the local press. Newspapers out of Europe, as a rule (save those in the larger Australian, South African and, of course, North American cities), are not so crowded out with matter as they are at home and on the Continent, and editors, in consequence, are not so averse to the insertion of a paragraph or two respecting the aim and object of the visitor. Where papers in the vernacular are in question, there is usually some person on the staff competent to translate the English copy. It is as well, however, to have the proofs checked by an independent party, as claims and ideas are wont to assume quite a different aspect at times, when loaded with metaphor and embroidered with flowery native embellishments.

A source of considerable annoyance and trouble in the East is the, apparently altruistic, individual who calls upon the foreign representative at the latter's hotel and offers, for a consideration, to introduce him to apocryphal buyers or people interested in such lines as the traveller is handling. If the traveller should succumb to his blandishments, it is as likely as not that he will make a round of the bazaar before the " box wallah " has got properly to work and inform the various merchants that he has arranged special terms which are only available if the bargaining is done through him ; should the visitor deny any such understanding, the " tout " will still lead the parties interested to believe that the prices quoted are only " try on " terms, and that he can obtain

better for them. Eventually the " box wallah " will be so fed up that, perhaps to clinch matters, he will agree to pay the " commission agent " an honorarium. The latter then shares his gains with the actual purchaser, so justifying his claim to be able to influence good prices. In some cases a prospective client will send two or three agents in order to find if the terms already quoted to himself are immutable or if they can, by bargaining, be reduced. Should the quotations vary the game is repeated, until the buyer is satisfied the bedrock price has been reached.

In Russia particularly, when it is suspected that estimates are to be called for in connection with engineering or building operations, as many as a dozen different commission agents will issue enquiries for materials, etc. Each man has reason to believe that he alone possesses, through a friend at court with whom the commission is to be shared, a special " pull," and each endeavours to obtain the most favourable quotation from the manufacturer or the latter's representative. Some will go a step further and, ignoring the representative, try to obtain prices direct from the home manufacturer. It is as well, therefore, that an arrangement is made whereby all enquiries received in England from a territory which is being visited by the firm's delegate shall be referred out to him, otherwise the contract stands a good chance of being lost, when everything is apparently favourable, owing to quotations clashing.

In some cases it may be necessary to modify

the usual terms, but, generally speaking, the manufacturer or his representative should decide on a certain scale and adhere strictly to it.

In Russia and South America particularly, the home firm with a local branch has much more chance of "cutting in," because, in the majority of cases, they will be approached by the authorities responsible for the work direct. Modifications of the conditions can then be adjusted first hand. Where enquiries are sent direct to England —if they are sent—tenders will be asked for more as a formality than with the idea of actually considering them. And even when they may receive some consideration, the formalities with which the contractor will be hedged round are often too complex to be undertaken by any but a firm with a branch, or at least a very fully accredited and capable local firm acting as agent on the spot.

In Great Britain, the "illegal commissions" Act has stopped the application of "squeeze," but abroad it still obtains to a surprising extent. In China and the Indian native states it has, perhaps, its largest number of devotees, but Russia and South America run the foregoing very close.

It is related that, once upon a time, a certain sahib in India was desirous of seeing how far it could be eliminated. With this object he carried out a series of experiments in the matter of sending his servant to the bazaar for various articles, reducing the value of the goods purchased on each occasion.

The native, it may be mentioned, so long as

he is sure he will not be blamed, has, as a rule, no objection to owning up as to the amount of commission he has obtained; consequently, the sahib had no difficulty in getting to know the extent of the "squeeze."

Eventually, thinking that this time, at all events, the boy could not score, he sent him to buy a small box of matches costing about a twelfth part of a penny.

"Well?" he queried triumphantly, on the servant's return, "you didn't manage to get anything out of that deal, did you?"

"Hah, Sahib!" responded the "bearer," smiling contentedly, and, removing his headgear, he pointed to his glossy locks. The Sahib gasped, first in surprise and then in admiration, as he had to admit that his endeavours were in vain. The "boy" had prevailed upon the vendor of the matches to give his hair a rub of cokernut oil!!!

To the *retailer*, on the other hand, a good "commission agent" is undoubtedly of use even though his dealing may not always be above suspicion. Some years ago a series of coloured drawings by Edmond Dulac were published in one of the illustrated Christmas numbers. At the time there was a craze in India for old Persian prints, to which the drawings already mentioned bore some slight resemblance. At the same time, one would scarcely have expected a native supposed-connoisseur to be taken in by them. Nevertheless, in Hyderabad, one such showed me with great glee four framed and glazed pictures which he

had " picked up " from a certain Bombay " tout " for 25 rupees each, and which, he was quite under the impression, were genuine old Moslem prints. They had been carefully varnished and doctored, but they were the self-same set that had been issued by the illustrated weekly, so that the " commission agent," allowing for the cost of the frames and time expended, must have made at least 23 rupees clear profit on each print.

From the foregoing, it will readily be seen that the affable gentleman of ingratiating manner and excellent English-speaking attainments, who would put the trusting traveller in touch with " all the most influential people, sar," is best given a wide berth.

CHAPTER XII

Opening up Business Abroad

WHILST the previous chapters have dealt with the question of sending out representatives and the obtaining of foreign trade from Great Britain, the question of foreign sales cannot be considered to have been dealt with, even cursorily, unless is examined the best *modus operandi* in regard to the work to be done by the permanent representative or agent sent out from home to live abroad.

Numbers of young men obtain posts of this nature every year, as is well known ; but, as a rule, such posts are applied for on the spur of the moment, merely because they offer apparent inducements which are not momentarily forthcoming in the home market. And although some firms *do* train certain members of their staff with a view to their running the business in one or other of their foreign branches, the majority rely principally upon outside applicants ; arranging possibly for the successful candidate to spend a month or so in the home office so that they may become familiar with the type of business carried on before sailing.

In such cases—that is to say, where the tyro

has a career abroad thrust upon him—it is scarcely likely that he will, under ordinary conditions, attain the success that he might hope for if he had prepared himself by studying the conditions of the country and obtaining some knowledge, at least, of the language before embarking upon the enterprise. It is safe to say that, although before the war there were excellent openings abroad for the right men, the chances available when the war ends will be twice as great as before—that is, providing the comparatively small but necessary preliminary training be taken.

Success in any walk of life, at home or abroad, cannot be expected to turn up, save in a few exceptional cases, without some definite preparation.

The man, therefore, who wishes to be in at the commencement should first of all decide in his own mind what part of the world is most likely to interest him, more or less, permanently. There are many, of course, to whom any place, east or west, would afford a transitory interest; but in embarking upon an undertaking such as I mention, the interest should be as deeply rooted as possible, for two reasons. The primary one is that, unless this interest in the country exists, the adventurer stands a very good chance of becoming discontented after a few months away from home. The second is that only when a foreigner has a certain amount of sympathy with a country or people can he do good work in that country.

Having decided upon the sphere of his future operations, his next step should be to read up

as much about that sphere, its inhabitants and customs, as possible, at the same time making a study of the language principally spoken—*i.e.*, in South America, Spanish or Portuguese; in India, Hindustanee; Egypt, Arabic, and so forth.

The third and last step is to find the opening which is to lead to success, and though it will perhaps be deemed that this should have been considered first of all, it will usually be found that there is no great difficulty in obtaining a certain type of post, if the applicant has fitted himself for it.

The main thing to do is to take the initiative; if no post such as the prospective adventurer desires is advertised as vacant, then he must personally get into touch with such houses as do business with the territory he has mapped out as his own. A glance through the "Mercantile Year Book" will reveal the names of the principal city export houses, together with brief details as to their spheres of action, and, providing the tyro has fitted himself in the manner indicated, an opening should not be very long in presenting itself.

(I am assuming, naturally, that the seeker is already conversant with the essential details of the particular business or profession he intends adopting.)

One fatal mistake often made by newcomers to a country, which should be guarded against when the post has been secured—that is, if ultimate success is to be sure—is, namely, the possibility

of becoming absorbed entirely by the English colony of whatever district the novice goes to.

To be with one's own fellow-countrymen is desirable and necessary, no doubt; but it is only by associating with and knowing the people of the country that a man can lay the foundations of an entente leading to mutual business success. I do not mean to imply by this that a man should go absolutely native, but there is a happy mean which should be aimed at. A great deal has been written, and is still being written, as to the desirability of capturing a bigger share of the world's trade by Great Britain, but this can never be satisfactorily accomplished until the Englishman realises the absolute necessity of learning at least *one* foreign language fluently. Parents will spend hundreds of pounds on education; youths will study engineering, commerce, law and medicine, and take degrees or their equivalent in the foregoing, but the language question is usually given quite a secondary consideration.

To cite an example: a civil engineer will undergo a costly training, spending twenty-five years of his life in the practice of his profession at home, and by the time he is forty-five will probably obtain a remuneration of perhaps £300 per annum. The same man, had he given a couple of years to the study of, say, Spanish, Italian or Russian, would possibly be able to make at least treble the amount abroad, with the chance of attaining to a consultant's post with considerably greater pecuniary advantages attached.

If a suggestion might be advanced, it would be that the various engineering institutes should only grant their membership to such as had a fluent knowledge of at least one foreign language, and that schools and colleges should pay more attention to the advantages of the living as opposed to the dead tongues.

The science of salesmanship, too, is but partially understood in this country.

American methods may be objectionable in some ways, but they have decided advantages in others.

The whole of the American magazine press also is, in reality, in league to stimulate the youth of that country to more vivid and active endeavours.

"Be a traffic manager," one advertisement reads; another, "Are you a ten thousand dollar man? If not, why not?" And the consequence is that the spirit of "making good" is instilled into America's boyhood practically from the time it begins to read and take notice.

Many of the admonitions and inducements offered are meretricious, no doubt, but an admonition to "push forward," even if it is not quite in the right direction, is better than silence and inertia.

One of the principal truths of life at the present day, although many dislike to admit it, is that advertisement (personal and otherwise) can do more to instil faith—whether it is in the next life, purple pills or clean milk—than all the religions rolled together.

It is not pleasant—sometimes it is entirely the reverse—but with the advent of cheap printing and a desire to live a little more luxuriously and with less work than one's forbears, if possible, it just had to come. As it has arrived, the only reasonable thing to do is to make use of it, and, by so doing, lay up the wherewithal to retire after the day's—or life's—work is done to some favoured spot where the cows are not erected in wood and canvas to call attention to the advantages of somebody's condensed milk, and the evening beans and bacon can be produced under one's own personal supervision instead of coming from a can which represents one of some other person's fifty-seven varieties. But, as already pointed out, to do this, the necessary preparation must be made beforehand.

CHAPTER XIII

Summary

THE ramifications of foreign trade are so many and varied that it would require a volume several times the size of this to treat upon them in even a moderately comprehensive manner. There are a thousand and one items of everyday use, each possibly of too small account individually to enable a merchant abroad to confine himself to the sale of one item only, yet which form, in the aggregate, a very considerable factor in Great Britain's oversea trade. Some are actually manufactured by us, some for us, and, again, in the case of some we only act as distributing agents.

Beads, bedsteads and birdcages, hairpins and photo frames, chocolate creams and mangles, pill boxes and trousers' stretchers—all and sundry are articles of world-wide usage. At the same time, each may be classed so that it falls under one of the four main branches of trade: *i.e.*, things to eat and wear, things for the household or things to work with. Under one of these four headings, therefore, they are indented for by merchants dealing in commodities appertaining to one of the four main groups.

With the exception possibly of beads and chocolate creams, the demand in any one territory for the greater number is not important enough to warrant any radical modification in design, so that the only difference will be that of quality. It is accordingly on the latter basis that the manufacturer will have to study the various markets, and it would be only waste of money to embark upon a large advertising campaign in the East for, say, the "pushing" of hairpins and birdcages. Yet a certain amount of publicity is desirable.

That afforded, therefore, by the direct "reminder" posted to the principal local dealers in whichever of the four commodities is in question will best meet the case. In the ordinary way, the buyer would indent upon his home agent merely for hairpins or birdcages—wire or wood as the case might be. The home agent would look up in the directory the manufacturers of the desired articles and ask for prices. The lowest quotation would then probably obtain the business.

If, on the other hand, the manufacturer of such articles, as would not bear the cost of sending out a representative, were to make known his existence and trade mark to the merchant abroad, the probability is that that particular mark would be specified on the indent. The ordinary leaflet or circular letter is not much good where trifling articles are concerned, particularly with the native buyer. The "reminder" is most successful when it takes the form of an attractive

calendar, glass paper-weight, paper or pocket knife, small mirror, ash-tray, or other article which stands a chance of being kept more or less in evidence. This method, moreover, has been "tried out" by Continental firms with great success.

Directories can usually be obtained dealing with all the principal cities and districts abroad. Thacker's Indian and Bottin's Continental may be cited as examples, and their purchase by the foreign sales department of factories whose profits depend upon a large number of small sales, should be one of the first steps to be taken before instituting a campaign abroad.

Where catalogues are sent, care should be taken to ascertain before posting what tariff restrictions are in force in the country of their destination. In Australia, for instance, there is a duty on catalogues of ½d. per ounce, where a number is sent to an individual firm, whilst "reminders" such as those forementioned may, in some territories, be subject to an import duty.

It is noteworthy, in showing the general trend of German methods in regard to overseas trade, that in all handbooks giving translations in various languages of business "form" letters, that the type dealing with preliminary negotiations invariably states either that such and such a house is opening up a branch in the territory to be exploited, or that a firm there has become associated with the manufacturers and will be pleased

to be at the addressee's service. In such English books as there are of the same nature—and these are few—the "form" letter usually mentions the despatch of a catalogue, and that "further particulars will be sent on demand."

In the past, German banking facilities have undoubtedly aided in opening up new business. It is doubtful, however, whether the long credits which some Continental firms granted have really turned out satisfactorily, either for the agents or the manufacturers themselves. What appeared, in many cases, to be a large turnover, was often made at an actual loss. Large stocks of commodities—on consignment or to be paid for by instalments stretching over a period of nine, twelve, and even eighteen months—were held by agents in South America, for example, and remained unsold for so long that they either deteriorated or went out of fashion, and, in consequence, had to be sold under cost price. Had cash against shipment or sight draft been demanded, the turnover would have been legitimate, because the agent would necessarily not have carried more stock than he could sell. And although the show of goods would not have been so imposing, each sale would have brought in *some* profit both to manufacturer and agent, and the stocks would not have deteriorated. The granting of long credits or sending out of goods on consignment not only has the effect of demoralising, still more, agents who belong to countries already demoralised to a certain extent,

inasmuch as they evade ready payments whenever possible, but, by flooding the market, it causes the articles themselves to depreciate in value.

In a former chapter the axiom is advanced that the production of a commodity governs the demand more than the demand governs the production, and this is true, but—the supply requires to be judiciously farmed out.

A hundred gramophones, for example, may present an imposing appearance in a shop window, but six or a dozen, attractively "dressed"—particularly if there are several other gramophone dealers in a town—carry more purchasing appeal. If there are only a dozen, probably a dozen people who are thinking of buying gramophones, will hasten their decision to purchase, for fear of having to await delivery, later, through the store being sold out. A hundred, on the other hand, displayed probably in two or three windows in the town, gives the idea that there is a glut and prospective purchasers not only obtain the idea that there is no hurry, but are tempted to wait until there is a clearance sale.

The art of window-dressing is not a subject for discussion here, but the manufacturer should bear in mind the psychology of that art when supplying his agents—particularly where consignment stocks are concerned. It is an easy matter to retain in the warehouse a good supply of any commodity from which the showroom can be replenished as necessary, and it does away with the "bargain sale" idea which a too lavish

display of a certain article invariably creates. The Kodak Company is probably one of the largest manufacturers of cameras in the world, yet the showrooms are a model where the psychology of eye-appeal is concerned—the appeal which has its genesis in showing just as much as will render the possible purchaser desirous to know and see more. The shops in Bond Street and Oxford Street suffer, as a rule, from a plethora of show goods. Where a jeweller or a vendor of fancy statuary in London will throw into his window a representative selection to suit all tastes probably, the Parisian will expose to view only a couple of articles, but so attractively " set " as to give even more the idea of richness and value.

The psychology is actually the same as that which renders a slight display of silk stocking, with the fringe of a garter visible, more intriguing than the entire nude. So it is with the system of wholesale long credits and consignment stocks: the incentive for the agent to make sales is not nearly so great when he has to remit out of the money paid to him as when the money paid to him is returning to his own pocket in recoupment of his original outlay.

To recapitulate as regards the primary obtaining of foreign trade, there are three methods open.

The first is to circularise foreign buyers or advertise in the foreign journals and await results.

The second is to fix up with some recognised house of export agents at home.

The third, and best, method is for one of the manufacturer's heads or a good representative to go out, taking samples with him, and study the markets and fix up agencies direct. The third method is certainly the most expensive at the outset, but the ultimate gain is by far greater.

Information as regards the *general* requirements of various countries can be found, together with statistics of commodities imported, in the publications and blue books published by the Board of Trade. The Mercantile Year Book gives a directory or export houses in England, whilst Sell's Press Guide will put the advertiser on to the numerous foreign journals. And, if further incitement is required to stimulate the seeker after foreign trade, a perusal of the " Handy Shipping Guide," in conjunction with a good atlas, will manifest the very large number of places abroad to which our ships go laden with 'general cargo,' the modern days' equivalent of peacocks, apes and ivories.

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